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### Inequality and Solidarity

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# Inequality and Solidarity

Selected Texts Presented at the  
Euroculture Intensive Programme 2019

Edited by Simon Fink and Lars Klein



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Selected Papers Presented at  
Euroculture Intensive Programme  
2019

Edited by Simon Fink and Lars Klein

With contributions by  
Annika Hack, Dorottya Kósa, Joyce Pepe, Arianna Rizzi,  
Fleur Schellekens, Hanna Schlegel, Sophie Sievert-Kloster,  
Nemanja Milošević, Irene Signorelli and Andrea Catalina Tafur Pedraza

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## **Introduction: Dimensions of Inequality and Solidarity**

This collection of scholarly essays is the product of the Euroculture IP (IP) 2019, held at the University of Olomouc, and organized jointly by the Euroculture teams at Georg-August-University Göttingen, Palacky University Olomouc and Savitribai Phule Pune University. During the IP, students presented their research papers in peer groups, guided by experienced academics. With the help of the teaching staff, we have chosen the essays in this volume as the most innovative and best researched papers.

The overarching topic of the IP 2019 was “*Inequality and Solidarity*”. One of the promises of modern capitalist democracies was – and still is – that they try to alleviate problems of inequality. Especially the postwar European welfare states promised to generate more equality by social, educational, and regulatory measures. However, this promise, embedded in both policies and discourses, encountered major problems. *First*, inequality has often been conceptualized along the classical materialist left-right axis, targeting equality between social classes along a workers vs. capital view of the world. Other cleavages like gender equality, migrants vs. local population, or winners of globalization vs. losers of globalization (which may not be the same as workers vs. capital, as it pitches workers in different sectors against each other) have been neglected. *Second*, maybe even the “old” class-based notion of equality has lost its traction due to the ascent of the neoliberal worldview. Social policies are under pressure of

austerity measures, discourses of solidarity give way to discourses about the benefits of competition and free markets. *Third*, the “old” European welfare state discourse has always neglected the global dimension of inequality. Much of Europe’s prosperity was – and is – due to neocolonial economic relations that outsource socially and environmentally costly modes of production to “emerging economies” in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The benefits of these global production chains are felt in Europe as cheap consumer goods, the social and environmental costs of these global production chains are felt elsewhere?

However, even given this diagnosis, there may be examples of solidarity, on the local, national, and maybe even global level. Scholars of social capital debate whether this solidarity is only possible in small in-groups, generated by bonding social capital, or can be transferred to larger societal entities. Nevertheless, notions of solidarity underpin all forms of inequality-reducing policies and discourses.

The aim of the IP was therefore to analyze new and old forms of inequality and solidarity in Europe and beyond. That is, inequality might be analyzed within European nation-states, but we particularly welcomed contributions that looked at the interrelation of European and international inequality.

We welcomed papers that dealt with questions of inequality and solidarity in all forms, between all kinds of groups, in a materialist as well as culturalist perspective. Thus, inequality may refer to the material bases of inequality – income, terms of trade, access to natural resources – as well as to socially constructed forms of inequality – unequal access to cultural resources, or socially created distinctions. Inequality may be analyzed in a comparative perspective between countries, social groups, or subnational units; or in a historical perspective over time.

We were also interested in normative discussions about the costs and benefits of inequality and solidarity. Most analyses point to the ambivalent nature of inequality. On the one hand, inequality may serve as a powerful incentive for innovations, improvement of social practices, or products. Inequality may also simply be a by-product of highly complex and stratified societies, with the “right” degree of inequality creating economic and cultural dynamism. On the other hand, structural inequality is seen as harmful for societal cohesion and democratic self-determination, as it creates either apathy, or highly destructive conflicts between social classes, countries, or world regions. Similarly, solidarity can generate collective action and unify societies, but may generate conflicts if solidarity is understood to benefit in-groups at the expense of out-groups.



Within this broad outline, we grouped the papers into three topics: Normative dimensions of inequality and solidarity, material bases of inequality and solidarity, and discursive construction of inequality and solidarity. All contributions to this volume to some extent touch upon all three dimensions, but their main contribution is in one of the three main fields that the volume touches upon, which will be elaborated upon in the following.

## 1 Normative dimensions of inequality and solidarity

The first subtheme concerned normative considerations about inequality and solidarity. At first glance, most normative assessments are that inequality is bad and solidarity is good. However, things may not be so easy. For example, a discourse of inequality underpins the notion of meritocratic societies, arguing that inequality is the results of different capabilities and effort, incentivizing people to work hard make use of their talents. Similarly, globalization is on the one hand accused of generating inequality within and between nation states, and at the same time praised for alleviating poverty and generating a new middle class in emerging economies. On the other side of the coin, solidarity may be seen as a universal principle, but very often, solidarity is restricted to small groups (family, kin, nation) at the expense of out-groups. This subtheme looked for contributions that discuss these questions and offer normative judgements about different forms of inequality and solidarity.

The three chapters in the first part all fall into this subfield, and clearly tackle thorny normative issues. The chapter by *Dorottya Kósa* looks at the relation between citizenship education and solidarity. The cautiously optimistic argument is that there may indeed be a relation between the two, and hence that citizenship education increases positive attitudes towards solidarity. The chapter by *Sophie Sievert-Kloster* addresses the problem of intersectional discrimination, and whether EU law can adequately remedy these forms of discrimination. The chapter by *Joyce Pepe* finally analyzes whether EU quality schemes for food labelling fulfill their purpose.

## 2 Material bases of inequality and solidarity

The second subtheme was interested in – broadly speaking – material forms of inequality, their causes and consequences. Material inequality may refer to income, social and human capital, or to unequal exchange relations, on levels ranging from the local to global trade networks. The role of Europe and the EU is equivocal in this regard. On the one hand, the EU and European welfare states may be seen as devices trying to promote equality among their citizens. However, they also create insiders and outsiders, those who participate in the wealth

generated in the European single market, and those not partaking in the wealth generated by specialization, globalization, and trade. Analyses in this subtheme may cover empirical analyses and descriptions of inequality, as well as of the policies to combat them.

The two chapters in this part interestingly concern international problems of inequality. The chapter by *Irene Signorelli* analyzes the role of the EU in conflicts over the vital resource water, and whether EU diplomacy can remedy structural inequalities in the access to water. The chapter by *Annika Hack* looks at the thorny problem of how to deal with looted art from the colonial period. The argument is that who displays what in museums is strongly dependent on historical inequalities.

### 3 Discursive constructions of inequality and solidarity

The third subtheme covers – again, broadly speaking – those manifestations of inequality and solidarity that cannot solely be covered by material considerations. For example, Bourdieu’s theory of social distinctions covers less material inequality, but socially constructed forms of inequality that stratify societies. These discursive forms of inequality are often accompanied by material inequality – either resulting from material inequality, or being used to create and justify material and legal inequalities. Think of the creation of refugees as a concept or “second class citizens”. On the other hand, these discursive forms of inequality can take on a life of their own, structuring societies into haves and have-nots on a local, national, or global scale. Similarly, solidarity is to a large extent socially constructed. Who is deemed to be “worthy” of solidarity? What does solidarity entail, and how far does it go? How does Europe export its notions of inequality and solidarity into the world? In how far does Europe live up to these images? These questions are debated in the arts and media, in party programmes, and in everyday discourse.

As befits the name *Euroculture*, many students were interested in this discursive dimension of inequality and contributed papers that fall into this topic. The chapter by *Jelmer Herms* analyzes how populist discourse is not only a national phenomenon, but how populist actors and arguments cross national boundaries. The chapter by *Fleur Schellekens* studies the depiction of refugees in Dutch newspapers, and whether the pictures used evoke notions of solidarity or inequality. The chapter by *Andrea Catalina Tafur Pedraza* shows how new media platforms can support transnational solidarity. The chapter by *Arianna Rizzi* demonstrates that Interrail programs can have an impact on the European identity of travelers. The chapter by *Nemanja Milošević* finally analyzes how wealth inequality is presented in TV series.

As different as all contributions may be in their specific area of interest and in their methodological approach, we believe that they all show how the social science and cultural studies can tackle important problems of inequality and solidarity. Finally, we would like to thank all organizers and participants of the IP 2020. Only their dedication made the IP and this publication possible.

*Simon Fink and Lars Klein,*  
Göttingen, June 2020



## **Part 1.**

### **Normative dimensions of inequality and solidarity**



# Global Citizenship Education as a tool to increase solidarity in the European Union

*Dorottya Kósa*

## 1 Introduction

In the early 90's politico-economic literature began to explore the subject of globalization in the context of the capitalistic system.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the concept emerged and became a focal point in political discussion. With the passing of time, the discussion on globalization shifted from topics concerning economic growth to social issues. The quest was now to reveal its effects on cultures all around the world. Even though various social theories agree on some of the significant elements of the phenomenon, defining globalization and its characteristics remains a challenge for social scientists.<sup>2</sup> Globalization emerged in the late 80's as a result of the world's interconnectedness, freedom of movement and the rapid and perpetual development of technology. Computerized digital networks made it possible to have a better, faster and easier transfer of information even at an international level. In the early 2000's the flow of information became the primary ground for heavy industry, mass production and consumption through

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<sup>1</sup> Theda Skocpol, "Review: Wallerstein's World Capitalist System: A Theoretical and Historical Critique," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 (1977): 1075–90.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Kellner, "Theorizing Globalization," *Sociological Theory* 20, no. 3 (November 2002): 285–305, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0735-2751.00165>.

social conformity.<sup>3</sup> These faster and easily accessible information channels facilitated the promotion of democratic values, human rights, environmental solutions and conscious consumption in media communication, education, culture and entertainment.

Thus, globalization in a way benefited social progress and improvements through consumption.<sup>4</sup> National boundaries started to dissolve since a significant number of people began to live simultaneously in several countries or to possess multiple citizenships. As a result, globalization allowed many non-dominant cultures and perspectives to emerge in both online and offline communities. Therefore, self- and cultural identification has shifted from the local and national levels to the global and cosmopolitan stages.<sup>5</sup> This means that globalization blurred national boundaries by shifting solidarities within (local and national) and outside (global and cosmopolitan) nation states.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, predominantly western societies became multicultural and more diverse in their multiplicity of nationalities, ethnicities, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, religions, abilities and disabilities and so on. Educators, teachers and policy-makers realized the need to reform the education system so that it encourages students to develop the necessary skills needed in a global, multicultural and diverse society. Global citizenship education is defined as the knowledge and set of skills that enhances political participation and, awareness, increases social sensitivity and teaches environmental consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

This study aims to present the most important concepts and approaches related to global citizenship education. Moreover, it seeks to *explain the ways in which global citizenship education increases the degree of unity among students and creates a sense of solidarity between them with regards to social issues*. The paper uses the findings of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2016 to investigate the feeling of solidarity among those European students who participated in global citizenship education. The goal of the ICCS-IEA 2016 research was to understand the extent to which citizenship education contributed to the development of students' values, skills, knowledge, behavior and attitudes towards the values and principles that global (or European) co-operation is based on.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, with the help of the ICCS 2016 study this research paper will explore the ways in which citizenship education contributes

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<sup>3</sup> Kellner.

<sup>4</sup> Kellner.

<sup>5</sup> Julie Andrzejewski and John Alessio, "Education for Global Citizenship And Social Responsibility," n.d., 15.

<sup>6</sup> Carlos Alberto Torres, "Globalization, Education, and Citizenship: Solidarity Versus Markets?," *American Educational Research Journal* 39, no. 2 (June 2002): 363–78, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312039002363>.

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Davies, "Global Citizenship Education - Introduction: Definition and Debates," *University of Birmingham*, 2008, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Köhler et al., "ICCS 2016 User Guide for the International Database," n.d., 324.

to cooperation between EU member states, support basic European values and increases the level of solidarity. The paper's research question focuses on how EU (or global) citizenship education can increase the degree of solidarity among students.

## 2 Theoretical Background

In this section the main theoretical concepts related to the research question will be presented in order to achieve a better and deeper understanding of Global Citizenship education. Important elements of the research are explained separately for a comprehensive clarification of approaches and theories used in this paper.

### 2.1 Education

Social sciences make a distinction between *fact* and *value*, influenced by Weber's division of labor that differentiates "*normative political philosophy*" and "*objective social scientific research*".<sup>9</sup> Evidently, it is advantageous to have such differentiation in social sciences where normative and empirical understandings are useful to separate.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the method has been applied in Western scientific thinking and employed in Western education systems as well. Contemporary education systems are premised on the development of practical and theoretical reasoning, both of which are heavily based on empirical knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

Patriarchal logic is constructed and works with hierarchized binary oppositions such as day/ night or passive/active.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Weber's division of facts and values are presented and clearly drawn in Western societies patriarchal education system. Accordingly, reason and emotion are juxtaposed as binary opposites: the former leads to objective truth and is always associated with masculinity while the latter is classified as subjective and intrinsically feminine.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences;," n.d., 216.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Wallace, "Ann Oakley. Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences. 402 Pp. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.," 2007, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen Lynch, Maureen Lyons, and Sara Cantillon, "Breaking Silence: Educating Citizens for Love, Care and Solidarity," *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 17, no. 1–2 (June 2007): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210701433589>.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Flood with Richard Howson, "Engaging Men in Building, Chapter Four: Gender Equality Undressing Patriarchy in the Male Order Development Encounter," [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker\\_Edstroem/publication/274193459\\_Undressing\\_Patriarchy\\_in\\_the\\_Male\\_Order\\_Development\\_Encounter/links/5551d1bb08ae12808b3944e5/Undressing-Patriarchy-in-the-Male-Order-Development-Encounter.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker_Edstroem/publication/274193459_Undressing_Patriarchy_in_the_Male_Order_Development_Encounter/links/5551d1bb08ae12808b3944e5/Undressing-Patriarchy-in-the-Male-Order-Development-Encounter.pdf), accessed June 8, 2019, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker\\_Edstroem/publication/274193459\\_Undressing\\_Patriarchy\\_in\\_the\\_Male\\_Order\\_Development\\_Encounter/links/5551d1bb08ae12808b3944e5/Undressing-Patriarchy-in-the-Male-Order-Development-Encounter.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker_Edstroem/publication/274193459_Undressing_Patriarchy_in_the_Male_Order_Development_Encounter/links/5551d1bb08ae12808b3944e5/Undressing-Patriarchy-in-the-Male-Order-Development-Encounter.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Nussbaum, M.C. (1995), Human capabilities, female human beings in Lynch, Lyons, and Cantillon, "Breaking Silence."

Hence, the fundamental issue with the distinction between fact and values is that it stems from androcentric logic, which is hierarchical and devalorizes the feminine. Since modern citizens are defined as “rational actors”, the role of education is to prepare them for rational life where economic and political competences are prioritized over emotional work and education fostering love, care and solidarity.<sup>14</sup> This means that citizens-to-be often go through their education without being taught how to care for the environment, enhance solidarity in a global context and respect others. It is essential to educate students about the outcomes of their actions and make them aware of the results of their behavior because being a member of a society involves certain duties not only related to objective elements, such as taxation, but social responsibilities as well.

Schools are one of the most important spaces of socialization, because students internalize their beliefs, norms and values through education. They experience democracy in classrooms for the first time and learn how to work towards a common goal together. This is why constructing a holistic education agenda where acquiring skills related to respect, love, care and solidarity is just as crucial as learning to evaluate and test facts in order to create and maintain a functioning social order.

## 2.2 Solidarity

According to the founding figures of sociology such as Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber and others, social solidarity focuses on the commonalities among individuals that creates a desire and a will within them to act in unity.<sup>15</sup> In other words, solidarity is the underlying mechanism that binds people to act collectively in order to achieve a shared goal.

In his seminal work, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), Durkheim argues that solidarity needs mutual understanding and shared beliefs.<sup>16</sup> He states that individuals are socialized in institutions through rules and through interactions with others. Durkheim distinguishes between mechanic and organic solidarity with the former being based on shared experience, common values and beliefs and the latter resulting in individuals functioning alone but interdependently. Following the logic of Durkheim’s organic solidarity, it is possible to exist in social networks that are cooperating, interacting without shared experience or culture. Therefore, organic solidarity does not require shared values or common culture, rather, it works simply as a consequence of the symbiotic relationships in which people engage, complementing one another.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Lynch, Lyons, and Cantillon.

<sup>15</sup> Graham Crow, “Social Solidarities,” *Sociology Compass* 4, no. 1 (January 2010): 52–60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00262.x>.

<sup>16</sup> Patricia Chewning Young, “The Sociology of Emile Durkheim,” 1962.

<sup>17</sup> Crow, “Social Solidarities.”



The concept of solidarity in contemporary life involves mutual understanding and shared commitment. Hence, solidarity brings people together and makes them act collectively in order to change what needs to be changed.<sup>18</sup> In other words, solidarity is binding people together by forming a sense of unity through sympathies and mutual respect.

In a 2017 Eurobarometer study 45% of EU citizen participants stated that social equality and solidarity should be emphasized. In the same study respondents said they would prefer a Europe in 2030 where more importance is placed on solidarity (62%) than individualism (13%), while 18% preferred that both have equal importance. The findings of the Eurobarometer survey show that in almost all EU Member States respondents would prefer a society in 2030 where more importance is placed on solidarity. The highest proportions of respondents who agreed with this statement were in Cyprus, France, Spain, Greece and the Netherlands. In contrast the lowest rates were in Germany, Bulgaria and Estonia.<sup>19</sup>

This means there is indeed a need for greater solidarity in European society coming from the citizens of the European Union. Based on the theory of organic solidarity it is possible to increase the degree of solidarity in a culturally diverse environment such as the European Union.

### 2.3 (Supranational) Citizenship

According to the “traditional” definition of citizenship, a citizen is a person who lives within a nation state, and thus who is entitled to certain rights and privileges as well as bound by duties and obligations.<sup>20</sup> This means that citizenship for some is simply granted by the fact that they were born in a certain territory, while for others it is gained by passing certain national tests. However, today, the term citizen is much more complex, than it was a few centuries ago.

Marshall argues that citizenship can be deconstructed into three elements, which explain different dimensions of the concept.<sup>21</sup> He differentiates between civil, political and social citizenship. According to him, civil citizenship encompasses individual rights and freedoms that citizens in different state territories

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<sup>18</sup> Michelle J. Bellino and James Loucky, “Education as Solidarity: Education as Solidarity,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (September 2017): 229–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12210>.

<sup>19</sup> “Special Eurobarometer 467 - Future of Europe,” Social Issues (European Union, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Lagassé, P (Ed.). (2000) *The Colombia encyclopedia* (6th ed.) New York: Columbia University Press in James A. Banks, “Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age,” *Educational Researcher* 37, no. 3 (April 2008): 129–39, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08317501>.

<sup>21</sup> Marshall, T.H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class and other Essays*. Cambridge University Press in Banks.

have.<sup>22</sup> This makes citizens equal before the law. The political aspect of citizenship grants citizens the opportunity to access and, participate in politics through elections, and to exercise political power by being able to stand for election. The social dimension of citizenship consists of access to healthcare, education, welfare and participation in communities and national civic culture. Marshall's citizenship typology is well-established, although it is missing the cultural dimension of citizenship. Cultural citizenship reflects upon languages, minorities, identities and other cultural characteristics that are important for historic communities.<sup>23</sup>

Global immigration and increasing diversity in nation states have stimulated increased academic reflection on the notion of citizenship in the past decades. Two important but controversial approaches to study global citizenship are the assimilationist and the transformative conceptions.

The *liberal assimilationist* viewpoint claims that in order to achieve global citizenship – individuals have to give up their traditions, cultures and languages and adapt to the dominant majority culture. Hence, following the logic of this theory, the more homogenous a group is, the easier it will be to maintain national and civic culture efficiently. However, this approach fails to provide a solution to complex issues related to community rights and legacies.

*Transformative citizenship* theory holds that diverse groups can keep their cultural identities and still have an overarching set of shared values, goals and beliefs that bond them together.<sup>24</sup> In addition, in a world that mostly embraces freedom of movement, it is possible and increasingly common for individuals to have multiple citizenships. Social theories argue that identity is overlapping and an ever-changing contextual state which is not fixed or static but transformative and dynamic. In the contemporary global world, citizenship is based on a response to intertwining and multiple identities.<sup>25</sup> The transformative citizenship approach allows individuals to have several national identities at the same time. Moreover, this form of citizenship makes it possible to have local, national and global citizenship in simultaneously.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.4 Global Citizenship Education

Increasing mobility, growing interconnectedness across social realms shape new opportunities for social cohesion worldwide. With the rise of data and information flow, modern lifestyles have produced new challenges and opportunities on a global level. Global citizenship education seeks to provide students with

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<sup>22</sup> Andrzejewski and Alessio, "Education for Global Citizenship And Social Responsibility."

<sup>23</sup> Banks, "Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age."

<sup>24</sup> Banks.

<sup>25</sup> Shultz, L., "Educating for Global Citizenship: Conflicting Agendas and Understandings," *University of Alberta* 53, no. No. 3 (2007): 248–51.

<sup>26</sup> Banks, "Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age."

reflexive competencies and critical assessment skills to prepare them for acting in public networks. Its purpose to make them understand the complexities of globalization and encourages them to act not only on a local or national level but on a global scale as well. This means that students can learn how to engage in the world's political, social, cultural and environmental affairs.<sup>27</sup>

Global citizenship education aims to move the concept of citizenship from the rhetorical realm to the practical one. Therefore, it challenges institutional governance by inspiring students to not only act on behalf of their own nation state but also to take responsibility for issues on a global level. Thus, young citizens can understand global responsibility and evaluate the outcomes of their actions. Global citizenship sensibilities include openness to cultural diversity, a desire for fairness, compassion and equal opportunities and sustaining environmental development.<sup>28</sup> Hence, it emphasizes soft skills and the importance of empathy, tolerance and solidarity notions that are partially or completely missing from the traditional Western patriarchal education systems.

Andrzejewski and Alessio describe a comprehensive framework that explains the three main learning outcomes of global citizenship education.<sup>29</sup> Firstly, it helps students understand citizenship responsibilities to others, to the society and to the environment. From this follows that students can explore the meaning of democracy and citizenship from the perspective of a non-dominant group. In this manner they can discover their rights and the obligations to their communities, their nations and to the world. It includes the environmentally conscious aspect since the education presents the relationship between a global citizen and the environment. Secondly, it aims to encourage students to engage in ethical behavior, which is useful in their personal, professional and public life as well. In other words, students learn about fundamental national and international laws, civic and ethical responsibilities and human rights. This will allow them to make the link between personal or professional decisions and their impact on society and environment. Finally, global citizenship education provides knowledge and skills not only on local and national levels but on a global one as well. Consequently, students will be open to complex issues and ready to identify and examine appropriate solutions.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Fethi Mansouri, Amelia Johns, and Vince Marotta, "Critical Global Citizenship: Contextualising Citizenship and Globalisation," *Citizenship and Globalisation Research Papers* 1, no. 1 (October 11, 2017): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1515/jcgs-2017-0001>.

<sup>28</sup> Mansouri, Johns, and Marotta.

<sup>29</sup> Andrzejewski and Alessio, "Education for Global Citizenship And Social Responsibility."

<sup>30</sup> Andrzejewski and Alessio.

### 3 Methodology of the ICCS -IEA Study (2016)

The research focus of the 2016 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2016 is young people's roles as citizens of a global world where concepts of democracy and civic participation are in constant flux. The study is based on students' knowledge and understandings of civics and citizenship. Moreover, its aim is to explore the challenges of modern public education. The research concentrates on the participant students' attitudes, perceptions and activities. The study was carried out in various countries, and thus it can compare differences and similarities between them. The ICCS – IEA Study 2016 is a continuation of the same study that was carried out in 2009 and subsequently there are variables and research materials in the 2016 study that are linked to the former one.

#### 3.1 Research Questions of the ICCS - IEA Study

The ICCS study's structure is based on four main areas of investigation. “(1) Students' knowledge and understanding of civics and citizenship, and the factors associated with variations in this civic knowledge. (2) Students' current and expected future involvement in civic-related activities, their perceptions of their capacity to engage in these activities, and their perceptions of the value of civic engagement. (3) Students' beliefs about contemporary civil and civic issues in society, including those concerned with civic institutions, rules, and social principles (democracy, citizenship, and diversity), as well as their perceptions of their communities and threats to the world's future. (4) The ways in which countries organize civic and citizenship education, with a particular focus on general approaches, the curriculum and its delivery, and the processes used to facilitate future citizens' civic engagement and interaction within and across communities.”<sup>31</sup>

#### 3.2 Sample of the ICCS - IEA Study

The samples have been drawn randomly from around 94,000 students in their eighth year of schooling. Approximately, 3800 schools from 24 countries participated, most of them also in 2009. One class participated from each school. Moreover, in the 2016 study a reformed European student questionnaire was added with around 53,000 student respondents from 14 European countries. This paper will work with the 14 European questionnaires (BFL – Belgium, BGR – Bulgaria, HRV – Croatia, DNK – Denmark, EST – Estonia, FIN – Finland, ITA – Italy, LTU – Lithuania, LVA – Latvia, MLT – Malta, NLD – Netherlands, NOR- Norway, SVN – Slovenia, SWE – Sweden).

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<sup>31</sup> Köhler et al., “ICCS 2016 User Guide for the International Database.”



The research will focus on three countries that have been chosen based on the findings of the Eurobarometer survey. Based on the overlap between the analysis of the Eurobarometer and the participating countries in the ICCS-IEA (2016) study this paper will focus on three EU member states. The Netherlands and Sweden were among those countries that had a higher proportion of participants who stated that social equality and solidarity should be emphasized more. In contrast, Estonia is a country where respondents had the lowest rates, with many participants saying that social equality and solidarity should be emphasized less.

### 3.3 Limitations

The research is based on observational and non-experimental cross-sectional data, and thus causal inferences cannot be established. In the study, population features were not observed. Consequently, conclusions on percentages do not represent the objective reality of students' characteristics. The ICCS-IEA (2016) Study Guide suggests that while analyzing the data of the study, authors should use the term "estimated proportions of students".<sup>32</sup> Additionally, mainly nominal and ordinal variables have been used, and thus categorical variables need to be created for further analysis.

Variation between students might be low since, the research has been carried out in schools and the samples are more likely to be homogenous. There is no record of the students who have been surveyed; hence the research cannot keep the variables under control by means of school characteristics. This means, that the ICCS study does not measure whether or not the students have been taught by the same teachers, from the same curriculum or with the same methods.

## 4 Methodology of the Analysis

SPSS has been used to analyze ICCS-IEA (2016) data in this study. SPSS Statistics is a software package that is widely used among social scientists for interactive statistical analysis.

For the analysis, descriptive statistics such as cross tabulation, frequencies and other descriptive measurements have been used. In addition, to predict numerical outcomes, linear regression has been run on the variables (independent: EU citizenship education [02A-02D]; dependent variables: Solidarity [04A-04E] variables, Cooperation [05A-05H] variables, EU values [11A-11E] variables).

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<sup>32</sup> Köhler et al.

#### 4.1 Variables Used and Created

In the ICCS-IEA Study every student participant was asked the same questions, therefore the ICCS study created the same SPSS database for each country. Every relevant question has been measured with scaled answer options (e.g.: 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-disagree, 4-strongly disagree). The first block (01A-01F) measures the respondents' sense of belonging to Europe. The second part (02A-02D) focuses on the students' previous opportunities to study Europe from a historical, economic, political and social point of view. The third section (03A-03F) asks questions about EU policies and measures support for these policies. The fourth unit (04A-04E) deals with the degree of solidarity towards foreigners and immigrants. The fifth block's questions (05A-05H) are centered on questions linked to cooperation between EU member states (on issues such as the environment, unemployment, education, economy, rights). The sixth part (06A-06G) was designed to research topics related to discrimination. The seventh section (07A-07E) asks questions about the future of Europe, while the eighth section (08A-08E) is about the students' personal expectations for the future. The ninth unit (09A-09F) focuses on the students' degree of conscious consumption. The tenth block measures the participants' opinions about the legal age related to certain rights. The final part (11A-11E) deals with different kinds of EU values, thus questions are concentrated on the topics of human rights, safety, the environment, economy and common rules and laws. For the analysis this paper will focus on the second, fourth, fifth and the last parts. The second part has questions that show the level of EU citizenship education, while the other three parts will demonstrate the degree of solidarity related to various issues.

#### 4.2 Tests

In order to make the analysis clear, this research combined the elements of the chosen blocks. Therefore, each section's elements (namely section two: 02A-02D, four: 04A-04E, five: 05A-05H and eleven: 11A-11E) have been merged into one by calculating their mean values. The scale of each question and the direction of the scales are the same, this is why, it was possible to combine them. Combination was necessary because the analysis is based on cross tabulation and this way outcomes are more distinctive.

To test the compatibility of the different variables of each block this research used Cronbrach's alpha analysis. Since the outcome is above 0,7 each sections Cronbrach's alpha reliability tests had to be higher than that value. Internal consistency reliability was checked by inter-item correlation matrix. Inter-item matrix examines the items that are meant to measure the same general construct or idea. This way it is easy to see whether or not they give similar scores. The com-

bination shows the participants' average value per block. For example, in the second section, the new variable shows on a scale from 1 to 4 (where 1 is "to a large extent", 2 is "to a moderate extent", 3 is "to a small extent" and 4 is "not at all") the average value of the four items (opportunity to learn the history of Europe, opportunity to learn political and economic systems of other European countries, opportunity to learn political and social issues in other European countries, opportunity to learn political and economic integration between European countries).

Cross tabulation was used to discover dependency between the independent variables (02A-02D) which are related to EU citizenship education and the dependent variables (04A-04E, 05A-05H, 11A-11E) that are linked to solidarity. Adjusted standardized residuals were set to investigate the number of cases in which the cell was significantly smaller than would be expected if the null hypothesis were true. They are adjusted to the row and to the column totals. Furthermore, Cramer's V test was used to explore the degree of dependency (0-2: weak, 2-4: medium, 4 or above: strong).

## 5 Analysis

### 5.1 Age and Gender division of the sample

Just as with the gender division, the minimum, maximum, standard deviation and the average age of the respondents are measured by each country. In the Dutch sample (N=2812) the average age was 14, the minimum age was 11 and the maximum was 16.5. Standard Deviation was 0,5. In the sample of the Netherlands there were 1389 boys and 1423 girls. In Sweden (N=3246) the average age was 14,6 with a minimum age of 13,25 and a maximum age of 17,17. The Standard Deviation was 0,35. 1647 boys and 1599 girls were present in the Swedish sample. In Estonia (N=2855) the respondents' average age is 14,9. The minimum age was 13,5 and the maximum age was 17,25 with a Standard Deviation of 0,39. In the Estonian sample there were 1421 boys and 1436 girls.

### 5.2 Country division

In this section, this paper will present a general overview of each country's EU citizenship education and its effect on students' attitudes towards solidarity, co-operation and European values. In each case Crombach's alpha test was above 0,7, thus it was possible to merge the sections' items by creating new variables. [02A-02D] Crombach's  $\alpha=0,759$  ; [04A-04E] Crombach's  $\alpha=0,773$  ; [05A-05H] Crombach's  $\alpha=0,789$  ; [11A-11E] Combach's  $\alpha=0,809$

Table 1: **Netherlands**

	<b>EU citizenship education [02A-02D]</b>		<b>Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</b>	<b>Cooperation (between EU Member states) [05A-05H]</b>	<b>EU values [11A-11E]</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	4,4%	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	17,3%	23,8%	12,5%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	50,5%	<b>Agree</b>	67,4%	72,4%	73,1%
<b>To a small extent</b>	39,4%	<b>Disagree</b>	13,7%	3,6%	14%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	5,8%	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1,5%	0,2%	0,4%
<b>Total</b>	(100%) 2789	<b>Total</b>	(100%) 2786	(100%) 2793	(100%) 2782

*Sweeden: [02A-02D] Crombach's alpha=0,813 ; [04A-04E] Crombach's alpha=0,867 ; [05A-05H] Crombach's alpha=0,801; [11A-11E] Crombach's alpha=0,818*

Table 2: **Sweden**

	<b>EU citizenship education [02A-02D]</b>		<b>Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</b>	<b>Cooperation (between EU Member states) [05A-05H]</b>	<b>EU values [11A-11E]</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	8,6%	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	48,5%	32,2%	15,1%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	55,6%	<b>Agree</b>	44,5%	65,2%	73,2%
<b>To a small extent</b>	32%	<b>Disagree</b>	5,3%	2,4%	10,6%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	3,8%	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1,7%	0,3%	1,1%
<b>Total</b>	(100%) 3191	<b>Total</b>	(100%) 3200	(100%) 3191	(100%) 3189

In the Netherlands, just over half of the sample (50,5%) received a moderate extent of EU citizenship education. The “agree” proportion was the highest in all three cases (fourth, fifth and eleventh).

In Sweden the sample was similar to the Dutch one in terms of EU citizenship education. Most of the respondents (55,6%) said that they had EU citizenship education to a moderate extent. The dependency variables showed that the level of solidarity is rather high in the Swedish sample (“strongly agree that solidarity should be increased towards foreigners and immigrants in Europe). However, with the other two dependent variables the outcomes were not too different from the Dutch one. 65,2% agreed that cooperation should be further advanced between EU Member states and 73,2% agreed with the values of the European Un-

*Estonia: [02A-02D] Cronbach's  $\alpha=0,770$  ; [04A-04E] Cronbach's  $\alpha=0,769$  ; [05A-05H] Cronbach's  $\alpha=0,809$  ; [11A-11E] Cronbach's  $\alpha=0,814$*

*Table 3: Estonia*

	<b>EU citizenship education [02A-02D]</b>		<b>Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</b>	<b>Cooperation (between EU Member states) [05A-05H]</b>	<b>EU values [11A-11E]</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	3,6%	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	13,6%	33,1%	13,3%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	51,3%	<b>Agree</b>	68,9%	65%	77,1%
<b>To a small extent</b>	41,4%	<b>Disagree</b>	15,9%	1,5%	8,9%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	3,8%	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1,6%	0,4%	0,7%
<b>Total</b>	(100%) 2837	<b>Total</b>	(100%) 2836	(100%) 2839	(100%) 2829

ion.

The Estonian sample presents a similar division of the participants to the Dutch or the Swedish one. Around half of the participants said that they had EU citizenship education to a large extent, and in all of the three dependency variables the “agree” answer was the most popular.

### 5.3 Effect of EU citizenship education in the Netherlands

In order to see the correlation between the independent (02A-02D) variables and the dependent ones (fourth, fifth and eleventh sections) this research paper used cross tabulations. The values are set to the EU citizenship education extent therefore the percentages are understandable in rows. This means that the rows numerical rubrics add 100% together. Therefore, the values need to be understood in a horizontal way.

Cramers' $v = 0,95$ <i>Table 4: Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</i>				
EU citizenship education [02A-02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	34,2%	57,5%	7,5%	0,8%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	18%	69%	12,1%	0,9%
<b>To a small extent</b>	14,8%	67,7%	15,8%	1,6%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	15,5%	59,6%	18%	6,8%

Cramers' $v = 1,61$ <i>Table 5: Cooperation (between EU Member States) [05A-05H]</i>				
EU citizenship education [02A-02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	53,3%	46,7%	0%	0%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	25,9%	73,2%	0,9%	0%
<b>To a small extent</b>	18,5%	75,8%	5,6%	0,2%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	20,5%	62,1%	15,5%	1,9%

Cramers' $v = 1,46$				
<i>Table 6: EU values [11A-11E]</i>				
EU citizenship education [02A-02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	38,3%	57,5%	4,2%	0%
<b>To a moderate extent</b>	12,2%	77,4%	10,3%	0,1%
<b>To a small extent</b>	10,2%	11,6%	17,8%	0,4%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	11,2%	58,4%	26,7%	3,7%

In the Dutch sample, among those who had received EU citizenship education to a large extent the “agree” category was the most popular (57,5) with regard to solidarity towards foreigners and immigrants, the “strongly agree” (53,3%) opinion with regard to cooperation between EU Member States and “agree” concerning EU values (57,5%). The Cramer’s  $v$  only showed a weak correlation between the independent and the dependent variables. This might be explained by the combination of the items that had different outcomes.

## 5.4 Effect of EU citizenship education in Sweden

Cramers' $v = 0,121$					
<i>Table 7: Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</i>					
EU citizenship education [02A-02D]	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
To a large extent	69,8%	22,55%	4,4%	3,3%	
To a moderate extent	50,1%	44,6%	4,1%	1,2%	
To a small extent	41,6%	50,8%	6,3%	1,4%	
Nothing at all	37,7%	39,3%	15,6%	7,4%	

Cramers' $v = 1,21$					
<i>Table 8: Cooperation (between EU Member States) [05A-05H]</i>					
EU citizenship education [02A-02D]	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
To a large extent	63,6%	34,9%	1,5%	0%	
To a moderate extent	38,8%	66,9%	1,3%	0,1%	
To a small extent	24,8%	71,8%	3,3%	0,2%	
Nothing at all	29,8%	54,5%	11,6%	4,1%	



Cramers' $v = 0,190$				
<i>Table 9: EU values [11A-11E]</i>				
EU citizen- ship educa- tion [02A- 02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	44,4%	46,9%	6,2%	2,5%
<b>To a moder- ate extent</b>	14,3%	76,8%	8,6%	0,2%
<b>To a small extent</b>	8,6%	76,8%	6%	1,4%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	12,5%	53,3%	15,6%	8,3%

In Sweden, among those who had received EU citizenship education to a large extent 44,4% strongly agreed and 46,9% simply agreed with EU values.

In Sweden the Cronbach's alpha was the highest. This means that it was slightly easier and more credible to combine the items in that national case than in the other two. Furthermore, the Cramer's  $v$  was the closest to a medium dependency in Sweden as well, therefore the students who had EU citizenship education to a large extent replied that they strongly agree with showing solidarity towards foreigners and immigrants (69,8%) and strongly agree with cooperation between EU Member States (63,6%).

### 5.5 Effect of EU citizenship education in Estonia

Cramers' $v = 0,095$ <i>Table 10: Solidarity (foreigners and immigrants) [04A-04E]</i>				
EU citizen- ship educa- tion [02A- 02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	28,3%	54,5%	13,1%	4%
<b>To a moder- ate extent</b>	14,7%	64,4%	15,7%	1,2%
<b>To a small extent</b>	11,5%	71,4%	16%	1,1%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	9,3%	60,7%	20,6%	9,3%

Cramers' $v = 0,141$ <i>Table 11: Cooperation (between EU Member States) [05A-05H]</i>				
EU citizen- ship educa- tion [02A-02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	57%	42%	1%	0%
<b>To a moder- ate extent</b>	35,9%	63,1%	1%	0,1%
<b>To a small extent</b>	28,1%	70%	1,7%	0,3%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	29,9%	57,9%	5,6%	6,5%

Cramers' $v = 1,37$				
<i>Table 12: EU values [11A-11E]</i>				
EU citizen- ship educa- tion [02A- 02D]	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>To a large extent</b>	44,4%	48,5%	6,1%	1%
<b>To a moder- ate extent</b>	14,6%	78%	6,9%	0,5%
<b>To a small extent</b>	9,3%	78,9%	11,3%	0,4%
<b>Nothing at all</b>	9,3%	72%	13,1%	5,6%

Between those who had EU citizenship education to a large extent in Estonia 54,5% said they “agree” with showing solidarity towards foreigners and immigrants. Most of them (57%) said they “strongly agree” with cooperation between EU Member States. In addition, 44,4% strongly agreed and 48,5% agreed with EU values. The Cramer’s  $v$  only showed a weak correlation between the independent and the dependent variables. This might be explained by the combination of the items that had different outcomes.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper provides a theoretical background of global citizenship education. It does so by explaining what it entails and presents the definitions of education, solidarity and citizenship. These fore-mentioned concepts of the research were explained distinctly for a comprehensive clarification of approaches and theories used in this paper. Therefore, *education*, *solidarity*, *citizenship* and *global citizenship education* are unfolded separately.

This research presents the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) on citizenship education and the methods used in the study. The study was carried out in 2016 and focused on young people’s roles as citizens of a global realm in order to measure participant students’ knowledge and understanding of civics and citizenship. Every relevant question has been measured with scaled answer options (e.g.: 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-disagree, 4-strongly disagree).

The independent variables consisted of items that focused on the students' previous opportunities to study Europe from a historical, economic, political and social point of view. Three other variable blocs have been used for the research: - firstly, the "Solidarity section" that dealt with the degree of solidarity displayed towards foreigners and immigrant; secondly, the "Cooperation section" which includes questions on topics linked to cooperation between EU member states (on issues such as environment, unemployment, education, economy); and finally, the "EU values" part which explored the extent to which students agree with different kinds of EU values, such as human rights, safety, environmental protection, economic integration and common rules and laws. Cross tabulations were used in order to investigate the impact of EU citizenship education on students' perception of solidarity, cooperation and EU values.

The results showed only a weak correlation between the independent and the dependent variables. Even though the dependency was weak in all cases, there was a visible tendency that showed that EU citizenship education affected the outcomes in the other three variables. Hence, the paper – answering the research question – demonstrated that EU citizenship education had an impact on the degree of solidarity.

Consequently, the research question of the paper: *"How can EU (or Global) citizenship education increase the degree of solidarity among students?"* has been answered. Learning about the European Union's history, political, economic and social environment makes students familiar with it, which means they will have the knowledge and thus they can relate to the history and treat it as theirs. This might result in greater appreciation of European values such as democracy, human dignity, equality, freedom, solidarity and cooperation.

Durkheim's organic solidarity theory is based on the common goals of a certain community. According to this theory, there is no need for shared culture in order to have shared values and goals. EU citizenship education teaches people about local, national and supranational rights and responsibilities; thus, it bonds EU citizens while letting them keep their local and national identities. As a result, those students who had EU citizenship education to a certain extent were more likely to value solidarity towards others and were more likely to prefer closer cooperation within the EU. Transformative citizenship theory, like to organic solidarity theory, holds that diverse groups can keep their cultural identities and still have an overarching set of shared values, goals and beliefs which bonds them together. Therefore, EU citizenship education can also help to enhance the degree of solidarity towards foreigners and immigrants since they will not be seen as a threat in any way (for example in an economic or in a cultural way). Hence, learning about love and care – notions that are considered to be *"feminine"* values – can facilitate an increase in the degree of solidarity. This means that those values that the patriarchal society perceives as *"feminine"* and does not include in regular education systems are useful and they have effective cohesion powers.

Further research on the topic could be carried out by including more EU member states and comparing their outcomes. In addition, this research would be great to repeat but without combining the items of the used variables. In this manner, the independent and the dependent variables could show a stronger correlation. Moreover, in this research paper only perceptions and attitudes have been measured, while actual behavior has not been. Additional research could also focus on the comparison of attitudes and actions of those students who received EU citizenship education.

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# **Intersectional Discrimination in European Union Law: Towards Redressing Complex Forms of Inequality?**

*Sophie Sievert-Kloster*

## **1 Introduction**

Identities are far from being fixed and singular. Quite the contrary, the very nature of identities is both fluid and complex. Everyone has an age, a gender, a sexual orientation, a belief system and an ethnicity; however, some of these identity markers are more permanent or visible than others. One may highlight, hide or change certain aspects of one's identity; however, not all traits are up for discretion. Accordingly, if a legal framework is to protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of these identity markers, it must be capable of responding to this complexity because if one is "to assume that groups are rigidly delineated by race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other status, [then one] is to render invisible those that are found in the intersections between those groups".<sup>1</sup>

*This paper seeks to critically assess the way in which the European Union's (EU) legal framework protects individuals who are discriminated against on multiple grounds.* In particular, this paper will focus on the phenomenon of intersectional discrimination, which can broadly be defined as discrimination on the basis

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<sup>1</sup> S. Fredman, "Positive Rights and Positive Duties: Addressing Intersectionality," in European Union Non-Discrimination Law: Comparative Perspectives on Multidimensional Equality Law, eds. Dagmar Schiek and Victoria Chege (Abingdon: Routledge-Cavendish, 2008), 73.

of more than one ground, where the influence of these grounds cannot be separated. *The main contention of this paper is that despite recent attempts to expand the scope of EU anti-discrimination directives to better deal with cases of ‘multiple discrimination’, the EU’s legal framework remains unable to protect many individuals from unfair treatment because it does not adequately address intersectional disadvantages.* Rather, it has historically adopted a “one size fits all” approach to cases of intersectional discrimination, choosing to consider single grounds of discrimination separately rather than the ways in which these grounds can overlap and intersect.<sup>2</sup>

To support this contention, this paper will first explain what intersectionality theory is, the context in which it developed, and why it is a useful analytical tool. It will also explain the differences between different types of ‘multiple discrimination’ and discuss how current and proposed EU laws address this phenomenon. Furthermore, this paper will seek to contextualise its key argument by providing an analysis of three rulings by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) that highlight some of the challenges of addressing intersectional inequalities within the EU’s legal framework. These cases are: *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin and Others* (2016)<sup>3</sup>, *Achbita v. G4S Secure Solutions NV* (2017)<sup>4</sup>, and *Bougnaoui v. Micropole SA* (2017)<sup>5</sup>. Each of these cases deals with intersectional discrimination, yet they were each judged using a single-axis approach, thus raising the question: why is it so difficult for the ECJ to recognise and acknowledge intersectional discrimination when faced with it? Following on from this and with particular reference to the aforementioned cases, this paper will also consider whether and how intersectionality can nevertheless be addressed within the EU’s existing legal framework.

In discussing such a broad, complex topic, it is important to be aware of the limitations of adopting a legal perspective on an issue that undoubtedly extends beyond the law. For example, it is well known that it is usually the most advantaged of a disadvantaged group who seek legal recourse for discrimination.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it must be noted that intersectionality can never be the “panacea for discrimination law’s failings”.<sup>7</sup> Achieving substantive equality is an extremely challenging task and addressing intersectional discrimination within the legal

<sup>2</sup> Mieke Verloo, “Multiple Inequalities, Intersectionality and the European Union,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 233.

<sup>3</sup> Case C-443/15 *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin* [2016] ECLI:EU:C:2016:897.

<sup>4</sup> Case C-157/15 *Samira Achbita and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding v. G4S Secure Solutions NV* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2017:203.

<sup>5</sup> Case C-188/15 *Asma Bougnaoui, Association de Défense des Droits de l’Homme v. Micropole SA* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2017:204.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016), 81.

<sup>7</sup> Ben Smith, “Intersectional Discrimination and Substantive Equality: A Comparative and Theoretical Perspective,” *The Equal Rights Review* 16 (2016): 101.



framework of the EU is but one aspect of the reform needed to realise this goal. Put simply, there must be a willingness to look beyond the law, and instigate change and foster solidarity through other means, both at the national and EU level. Nevertheless, shifting away from a single-axis approach to discrimination towards a more holistic, intersectional approach is a good place to start.

## 2 Theoretical framework: definitions and key concepts

It is increasingly acknowledged that discrimination can occur on the basis of more than one ground. An individual who is discriminated against on the basis of their gender might also experience discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Such discrimination can function to compound disadvantage. The broad umbrella term used to describe this is ‘multiple discrimination’; however, it is important to note that multiple discrimination can manifest itself in different ways. While there is no settled terminology and terms are often used interchangeably, this paper will identify and define three main types of ‘multiple discrimination’.

### 2.1 Sequential multiple discrimination

This type of discrimination is in many ways the most straightforward to deal with. It involves discrimination on different grounds on separate occasions.<sup>8</sup> To provide an example, in the British case of *Al Jumard v. Clywd Leisure Ltd* (2008), a disabled man of Iraqi descent was subject to racist discrimination on one occasion and to discrimination on the basis of his disability on another. Both of these incidents contributed to his dismissal and, when the case went to the Employment Appeal Tribunal, each incident could be assessed on a single ground and compensation awarded accordingly.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2 Additive multiple discrimination

The second manifestation occurs when a person is discriminated against on the same occasion but on more than one ground. In other words, discrimination on the basis of one ground adds to discrimination based on another ground to create an *added burden*.<sup>10</sup> For example, if a series of desired attributes are stated in a job

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<sup>8</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 27.

<sup>9</sup> *Al Jumard v Clwyd Leisure Ltd and Others* [2008] UKEAT 0334\_07\_2101, [2008] IRLR 345.

<sup>10</sup> Timo Makkonen, *Multiple, Compound and Intersectional Discrimination: Bringing the Experiences of the Most Marginalised to the Fore* (Turku: Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akademi University, 2002): 11.

description, the lack of one will decrease the chance of success in getting the job, but the lack of a further attribute will additionally decrease the chance of success.<sup>11</sup> In cases of additive discrimination, each ground of discrimination can be separated.

### 2.3 Intersectional discrimination

Of these three strands of multiple discrimination, intersectional discrimination is easily the most complex and difficult to tackle. This is because it does not simply involve the addition of two sources of discrimination; the discrimination experienced is qualitatively different or, as Kimberlé Crenshaw describes it, “synergistic”.<sup>12</sup>

The most classic example of this is the US *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors*<sup>13</sup> case, which actually inspired the conception of the term intersectionality. In 1976, a group of five black women in Missouri filed a class action lawsuit against their employer General Motors pursuant to the company’s ‘last-hired, first-fired policy’. They argued that General Motors had been hiring white women to work in administrative positions and black men to work in industrial positions, but not hiring black women at all. They argued that this constituted discrimination on the basis of race and gender; however, they lost the case. The US District Court found that since both white women and black men had escaped redundancy, the applicants could not claim that they had been treated less favourably on grounds of either gender or race alone.

Thus, by analysing the claims separately, the district court failed to consider how the grounds of race and gender intersected. While intersectional discrimination falls under the umbrella of multiple discrimination, conflating the terms is problematic because different strands of multiple discrimination may require different legal approaches.

### 2.4 Intersectionality theory

Largely in response to the *DeGraffenreid* case, American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in the 1980s. She sought to explain the specific type of discrimination faced by the applicants in the *DeGraffenreid* case and argued that notions of what constitutes race and sex discrimination tend to be based on the experiences of the most privileged of a disadvantaged group (i.e. white women and black men for example), which functions to marginalise

<sup>11</sup> See *Perera v. Civil Service Commission (No. 2)* [1983] EWCA Civ. J0202-2, [1983] ICR 428.

<sup>12</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “De-marginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1, no. 8 (1989): 139.

<sup>13</sup> *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors*, 413 F. Supp. 142 (E.D. Mo. 1976).

those who exist at the intersections of these groups.<sup>14</sup> Discrimination law, by focusing on single axes of discrimination, has tended to homogenise protected groups.<sup>15</sup>

By drawing attention to the ways in which different inequalities overlap, intersectionality aims to disrupt the established group distinctions used in anti-discrimination law and to take into account the confluence of power relationships which compound disadvantage.<sup>16</sup> Calling for consideration of the power relations within, as well as between, social categories, intersectionality requires recognition that some accrue more privileges than others because of the intersecting categories in which they are simultaneously positioned.<sup>17</sup> To provide a simplified example, black men are in a position of power in relation to their gender, but not in relation to their colour. Conversely, white women are in a position of power relative to their colour, but not their gender. In other words, structures of power and domination operate in complex ways which cannot easily be captured through a model which conceives of identities as fixed and singular.

Despite its usefulness as an analytical tool, it is important to note that intersectionality theory has itself encountered some challenges. *Prima facie*, its aim appears to be to create better-defined sub-groups; however, this immediately raises the so-called ‘etcetera’ problem – that is, the extent to which sub-groups can multiply and reconfigure, and how the law can manage such proliferation.<sup>18</sup> This challenge will be addressed in the following sections.

### 3 Intersectionality and EU equality and anti-discrimination law

Since 2000, the body of EU law addressing discrimination has grown exponentially. While the notion of multiple discrimination has gained some traction in recent years, intersectional discrimination remains largely unaddressed in EU law. This section will provide an overview of some recent developments in EU equality and anti-discrimination law, focusing on how the current legal framework accommodates multiple discrimination and specifically, intersectional discrimination.

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<sup>14</sup> Crenshaw, “De-marginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex,” 140.

<sup>15</sup> Crenshaw, “De-marginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex,” 139.

<sup>16</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 31.

<sup>17</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 8.

### 3.1 Recent EU legislative initiatives

While the term intersectional discrimination is not mentioned anywhere in the legislature of the EU, a number of references to multiple discrimination can be found. In 2000, the EU adopted two new directives against discrimination: Directive 2000/43/EC<sup>19</sup>, which prohibits racial and ethnic origin discrimination (hereinafter the Racial Equality Directive) and Directive 2000/78/EC<sup>20</sup>, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (hereinafter the Employment Equality Directive). Both of these directives include references to multiple discrimination in their preambles<sup>21</sup>; however, multiple discrimination is not included in the operative parts of either of these directives. Discrimination on the basis of gender is also covered by a different set of EU directives<sup>22</sup>; however, references to multiple discrimination are notably absent.

### 3.2 Obstacles to addressing intersectional discrimination in EU law

Despite its complexity, the current EU anti-discrimination and equality legal framework poses severe challenges to intersectional claims. This is largely because different grounds of discrimination are covered by different directives, all of which have differing scopes. Moreover, justification defences and exceptions are framed differently for different grounds and all of these directives include exhaustive lists of discrimination grounds.<sup>23</sup> Added to this is the challenge of finding an appropriate comparator. These points are expanded upon below.

#### *a) Fragmented directives and differing scopes*

<sup>19</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin [2000] OJ L180/22.

<sup>20</sup> Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation [2000] OJ L303/16.

<sup>21</sup> See recital 14 of the preamble of the Council Directive 2000/43/EC and recital 3 of preamble to Council Directive 2000/78/EC.

<sup>22</sup> See Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) [2006] OJ L 204/23; Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services [2004] OJ L 373/37; Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC [2010] OJ L 180/1; Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security [1979] OJ L 6/24.

<sup>23</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 62.

One important obstacle to intersectional claims is the fragmentation of EU anti-discrimination law into different sets of directives. This is problematic because claims referred to the ECJ that deal with different grounds of discrimination may have to be brought under two or more directives, which can be a complicated and costly process.<sup>24</sup> Aggravating this issue is the fact that the different directives have different scopes of protection, which has led to a so-called hierarchy of discrimination.<sup>25</sup>

This hierarchy is said to exist because the Racial Equality Directive provides considerably stronger protection than the Employment Equality Directive. While the Employment Equality Directive covers only the areas of employment and occupation,<sup>26</sup> the scope of the Racial Equality Directive is much wider and, in addition to employment and occupation, also encompasses social protection, including social security and healthcare, social advantages, education and access to and supply of goods and services that are available to the public, including housing.<sup>27</sup>

*Figure 1: Scope of EU anti-discrimination directives*

	<i>Employment and vocational training</i>	<i>Workers' and employers' organisations</i>	<i>Social protection incl. social security</i>	<i>Social protection incl. healthcare</i>	<i>Social advantages</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Public goods and services incl. housing</i>
<i>Racial or ethnic origin</i>	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43	Dir. 2000/43
<i>Gender</i>	Dir. 2006/54 Dir. 2010/41	Dir. 2006/54	Dir. 79/9 Dir. 2006/54				Dir. 2004/113
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	Dir. 2000/78	Dir. 2000/78					
<i>Religion or belief</i>	Dir. 2000/78	Dir. 2000/78					
<i>Disability</i>	Dir. 2000/78	Dir. 2000/78					
<i>Age</i>	Dir. 2000/78	Dir. 2000/78					

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Erica Howard, "EU anti-discrimination law: Has the CJEU stopped moving forward?" *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 18, no. 2 (2018): 61.

<sup>26</sup> See Article 3 of Directive 2000/78/EC.

<sup>27</sup> See Article 3 of Directive 2000/43/EC.

The scope of the various gender discrimination directives is narrower than the Racial Equality Directive but wider than that of the Employment Equality Directive (see fig. 1). The result is that racial and ethnic origin is privileged over gender, which is in turn privileged over age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief. If for instance an individual were to be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation *and* ethnicity in the area of healthcare, this would mean that they would only be able to argue discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin under EU law and consequently, the intersectional nature of the discrimination would be ignored.

*b) Differing defences and justifications*

Another obstacle in the way of redressing intersectional claims is the fact that there are different exceptions and justifications for discrimination across different grounds. For example, the Employment Equality Directive permits direct discrimination on the basis of age if “within the context of national law, [it is] objectively and reasonably justified by a legitimate aim, including legitimate employment policy, labour market and vocational training objectives, and if the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary”.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, there is no general justification defence for direct discrimination any other ground covered by the Employment Equality Directive. While these exceptions are understandable, this regime of differing defences and justifications functions to reaffirm the ‘hierarchy of discrimination grounds’ and thus, poses a challenge to certain claims that straddle multiple grounds.

*c) Exhaustive list of grounds*

A further obstacle is the fact that the lists of grounds of discrimination in the directives are exhaustive. This stands in contrast to other regional and international legal instruments such as the ECHR<sup>29</sup>, the ICCPR<sup>30</sup> and ICESCR<sup>31</sup>, which have non-exhaustive lists. Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibits discrimination on grounds “*such as* sex, race, colour, language ... or other status”. The open nature of this list has enabled the European Court of Human Rights to expand it to include, for example, disability and sexual orientation. However, in the case of the EU directives, there is no scope for the ECJ to

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<sup>28</sup> Directive 2000/78/EC, art. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights, as amended) (ECHR).

<sup>30</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171 (ICCPR).

<sup>31</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3 (ICESCR).

add to these lists by analogy without legislative amendment.<sup>32</sup> This was reiterated in the recent *Chacón Navas* case, where the Court held that because the Treaty basis of the Employment Equality Directive did not refer to further grounds such as ‘sickness’, there was no legal basis for measures to counter such discrimination.<sup>33</sup> This is particularly problematic because of the absence of some important grounds. Craig and de Burca lament the exclusion of nationality from the remit of the Racial Equality Directive, arguing that this neglects “the troubling issue of the relationship between discrimination, race, and migration in Europe”.<sup>34</sup> The axis of class is also noticeably absent in the EU’s anti-discrimination laws.<sup>35</sup>

#### d) *Finding an appropriate comparator*

Finally, there is the challenge of finding an appropriate comparator, which is particularly difficult in intersectionality cases. This dilemma is best illustrated by the famous *DeGraffenreid* case. When the US District Court compared the applicants’ situation with that of other (white) female employees, they found no discrimination on the basis of gender. Conversely, when they compared the situation of the applicants’ with that of other black (male) employees, they found no discrimination on the basis of race.

### 3.3 Proposed legislation

The most significant development with regards to the recognition of multiple discrimination and intersectional disadvantage in EU law is not actually found in the existing body of EU anti-discrimination and equality law, but in a proposed legislative initiative. In 2008, the European Commission presented a proposal for a Council Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation<sup>36</sup> (hereinafter the Horizontal Draft Directive), which aims to address the flaws of the Employment Equality Directive and emulate the wider scope of the Racial Equality Directive. However, as unanimity is required in the Council, the

<sup>32</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 64.

<sup>33</sup> Case C-13/05 *Sonia Chacón Navas v. Eurest Colectividades SA* [2006] ECLI:EU:C:2006:456, paras 55-56.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Craig and Gráinne Búrca, *EU Law: Text, Cases and Materials* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 906.

<sup>35</sup> Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo, “Institutionalising Intersectionality in the European Union?” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11, no. 4 (2009): 490.

<sup>36</sup> European Commission, ‘Proposal for Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’ COM (2008) 426 final.

draft has remained blocked. Moreover, while the proposed directive acknowledges in its preamble the existence of multiple discrimination, it falls short of providing legal substance to this concept and it does not make any reference to intersectionality. That said however, the European Parliament has suggested a number of amendments to the proposed directive, including a clear definition of multiple discrimination in article 1.<sup>37</sup> This is a positive step forward, because for the first time multiple discrimination has a chance to become legally binding under EU law; however, unfortunately, the proposed definition recommended by the Parliament fails to recognise intersectionality.<sup>38</sup>

## 4 Contextualising intersectionality: the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice

In order to better understand the difficulties of redressing intersectional inequalities within the EU, it is necessary to look at the case law of the ECJ. To date, intersectionality has never been explicitly referred to in a case; however, this does not mean that cases dealing with intersectional discrimination do not exist. This section will analyse three cases brought before the Court that concern intersectional discrimination, but which were dealt with using a single-axis approach. These cases were carefully selected based on three key criteria: (1) they each came before the ECJ within the last five years, (2) they were each dealt with under the Employment Equality Directive, and (3) the presence of intersectional discrimination has been acknowledged in dissenting opinions by judges and/or secondary literature.

### 4.1 The EU's DeGraffenreid moment: *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin*

The 2016 *Parris*<sup>39</sup> case is the first example at the EU law level that clearly demonstrates the difficulties intersectionality poses to EU anti-discrimination law.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> European Parliament legislative resolution of April 2 2009 on the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation' COM (2008) 426-C6-0291/2008-2008/0140(CNS), amendment 37.

<sup>38</sup> Annick Masselot and Jess Bullock, "Stuck at the Crossroad: Intersectional Aspirations in the EU Anti-Discrimination Legal Framework," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012-2013): 11.

<sup>39</sup> Case C-443/15 *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin* [2016] ECLI:EU:C:2016:897.

<sup>40</sup> Mathias Möschel, "If and when age and sexual orientation discrimination intersect: *Parris*," *Common Market Law Review* 54 (2017): 1848.



Moreover, it was an excellent opportunity for the Court to break through the confines of single-axis approach to discrimination and acknowledge intersectional discrimination in its case law.<sup>41</sup>

The facts of the case are as follows. Mr David Parris, a former lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, claimed that the university discriminated against him on the basis of his sexual orientation and age. The university's pension scheme provided for the payment of a survivor's pension to the spouse or civil partner of the pension scheme member as long as the marriage or civil partnership had been entered into before the member reached the age of sixty. Although Mr Parris and his same-sex partner had been in a relationship for more than thirty years, they entered into a civil partnership in the United Kingdom in 2009 when Mr Parris was 63. This partnership could only be legally recognised in Ireland in 2011 when the Civil Partnership Act entered into force.

In a logic which very closely mirrors that of the US District Court in the famous *DeGraffenreid* case, the ECJ found that there was no direct discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as the policy affected all couples who entered into a marriage after the policy-holder's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. It also found evidence of direct age discrimination, but concluded that it was subject to the exceptions provided for in Article 6 of the Employment Equality Directive. Thus, from an intersectionality perspective, the question was whether the EU's legal framework would recognise the unique situation of older homosexuals excluded from survivor pensions.

It is unfortunate that the Court did not follow the opinion of Advocate General Kokott, who concluded that there was indirect sexual orientation discrimination<sup>42</sup>, as well as direct age discrimination<sup>43</sup>, and emphasised that particular attention needed to be given to the fact that the discrimination was "attributable to a combination of two factors, age and sexual orientation".<sup>44</sup> Moreover, she pointed out that "the Court's judgement will reflect real life only if it duly analyses the combination of those two factors, rather than considering each of the factors... in isolation".<sup>45</sup> Finally and most importantly, Kokott argued that there was indirect discrimination on the *combined* grounds of sexual orientation and age, even if it turned out that discrimination on each ground alone could not be proven.<sup>46</sup> Although the term 'intersectionality' is never explicitly mentioned in AG Kokott's opinion, it is nonetheless clear that this is what she is referring to.

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<sup>41</sup> Shreya Atrey, "Illuminating the CJEU's Blind Spot of Intersectional Discrimination in *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin*," *Industrial Law Journal* 47, no. 2 (2018): 287.

<sup>42</sup> Case C-443/15 *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin* [2016] ECLI:EU:C:2016:493, Opinion of AG Kokott, para 110.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 146.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, paras 147-159.

Unfortunately however, the Court chose to ignore AG Kokott's opinion and instead examined each of the claims separately, which led it to conclude that no discrimination had occurred. Had the Court taken an intersectional approach, it would have recognised that this was not a simply a case of additive multiple discrimination, but rather sexual orientation and age *intersected* to create a qualitatively different experience.

#### 4.2 Intersectionality and the Islamic headscarf: Achbita and Bougnaoui

In many ways, hijab cases are the “paradigmatic symbol of intersectionality”, as discrimination on the basis of wearing the Islamic headscarf affects only Muslim women, not Muslim men or non-Muslim women.<sup>47</sup> This section will discuss two recent cases decided by the ECJ's Grand Chamber on the same day, *Achbita v. G4S Secure Solutions NV*<sup>48</sup> and *Bougnaoui v. Micropole SA*<sup>49</sup>. Both of these cases concern Muslim women who were dismissed from their jobs for refusing to remove their headscarves.

The facts of the former case are as follows. Ms Samira Achbita worked as a receptionist for a temporary agency and started wearing a hijab after returning from parental leave. She was told to remove her headscarf and when she refused to do so, she was dismissed from her position, with her employer claiming that she had failed to respect the company's unwritten rule that no ‘visible signs’ of political, philosophical or religious beliefs should be worn in the workplace. The point of this rule, her employer argued, was to protect the company's ‘position of neutrality’. The Belgian Court of Cassation asked the ECJ whether this rule constituted direct discrimination. The ECJ held that it did not because the rule applied to all employees and there was no evidence that the rule was applied differently to Ms Achbita.

In the *Bougnaoui* case, the applicant was employed as a design engineer and occasionally visited clients on their premises as part of her duties. After one of her clients complained about her wearing the Islamic headscarf, she was asked to remove it by her employer. The French Court of Cassation asked the ECJ whether the wish of a customer to no longer have services provided by an employee wearing a headscarf was a ‘genuine and determining occupational requirement’.<sup>50</sup> The

<sup>47</sup> Sigtona Halrynjo and Merel Jonker, “Naming and Framing of Intersectionality in Hijab Cases – Does it Matter? An Analysis of Discrimination Cases in Scandinavia and the Netherlands,” *Gender, Work & Organisation* 23, no. 3 (2016): 281.

<sup>48</sup> Case C-157/15 *Samira Achbita and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding v. G4S Secure Solutions NV* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2017:203.

<sup>49</sup> Case C-188/15 *Asma Bougnaoui, Association de Défense des Droits de l'Homme v. Micropole SA* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2017:204.

<sup>50</sup> According to recital 23 of the preamble of Directive 2000/78/EC (Employment Equality Directive), “in very limited circumstances, a difference of treatment may be justified where a

ECJ held that it was not<sup>51</sup>; however, the Court pointed out, as it had done in *Achbita*, that it was for the referring court to decide whether the dismissal was directly or indirectly discriminatory.<sup>52</sup>

These two judgements have come under a lot of criticism. Firstly, the Court has been criticised for its lax application of the proportionality and necessity test and its uncritical acceptance of neutrality as a legitimate aim in justifying indirect discrimination.<sup>53</sup> These points were raised in the opinions by AG Sharpston in the *Bouagnaoui* case<sup>54</sup> and AG Kokott in the *Achbita* case<sup>55</sup>; however, the Court did not follow its AGs. Moreover, from an intersectionality perspective, both the Court and its AGs failed to acknowledge the presence of other factors leading to the dismissal, namely gender and ethnicity.<sup>56</sup> This is quite surprising given that AG Kokott explicitly describes these grounds as being stronger than religion, which would suggest that these grounds should be given some consideration.<sup>57</sup> It is also interesting the note that in the *Parris* case, which concerned two relatively privileged white men, AG Kokott supported the recognition of the combined effect of age and sexual orientation, while in *Achbita* she failed to consider the intersectional dimensions of the case.

In her opinion on the *Bouagnaoui* case, AG Sharpston briefly mentions the relevance of gender to the case, albeit in a completely different context. She recommends that the Court refrain from involving itself in the contentious and highly politicised debate between those who view the hijab as a feminist statement and those who view it as a symbol of oppression.<sup>58</sup> While this position is understandable, it is beside the point. The more pertinent question to be asked in relation to gender equality is whether the alleged neutrality requirement affected anyone in

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characteristic related to religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation constitutes a genuine and determining occupational requirement, when the objective is legitimate and the requirement is proportionate.”

<sup>51</sup> *Bouagnaoui*, para. 42.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Howard, “EU anti-discrimination law: Has the CJEU stopped moving forward?” 71; Erica Howard, “Islamic Headscarves and the CJEU: *Achbita* and *Bouagnaoui*,” *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law* 24, no. 3 (2017): 356.

<sup>54</sup> Case C-188/15 *Asma Bouagnaoui, Association de Défense des Droits de l’Homme v. Micropole SA* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2016:553, Opinion of AG Sharpston.

<sup>55</sup> Case C-157/15 *Samira Achbita and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding v. G4S Secure Solutions NV* [2017] ECLI:EU:C:2016:382, Opinion of AG Kokott.

<sup>56</sup> Dagmar Schiek, “On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU),” *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 18, no. 2 (2018): 94.

<sup>57</sup> AG Kokott emphasises that “unlike sex, skin colour and ethnic origin... the practice of religion is not so much an unalterable fact as an aspect of an individual’s private life,” which makes an expectation to moderate it reasonable (paragraph 116 of her opinion).

<sup>58</sup> *Bouagnaoui*, Opinion of AG Sharpston, para. 75.

practice more than Muslim women.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, bar in very particular circumstances, the Islamic headscarf ban overwhelmingly affects ethnic minority women in Europe and arguably contributes to the racialisation of Muslim women.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, this context was wholly ignored in the *Achbita* and *Bougnaoui* judgements.

## 5 Addressing intersectional experiences within the EU's existing framework: some suggestions

As the aforementioned cases illustrate, redressing intersectional discrimination in EU law remains a challenge and there is a pressing need to ensure full and systematic recognition of intersectionality at the legislative level.<sup>61</sup> However, this section will argue that there is still scope for this type of discrimination to be addressed within the existing legal framework.

### 5.1 Combining grounds within the existing list

The first option, which has already been taken in several EU member states such as France, is to combine grounds within the existing list without viewing this as a new subgroup.<sup>62</sup> The Commission takes the view that “the Directives already allow a combination of two or more grounds of discrimination to be tackled in the same situation,” although it recognises that the differing levels of protection provided for under the different directives may pose some challenges.<sup>63</sup> Some of these issues should be resolved if and when the Horizontal Draft Directive is passed, especially if the European Parliament’s recommendation to include a clear definition of multiple discrimination is adopted. However, even if the directive were to be passed and all of the proposed amendments accepted, this approach seems better suited to sequential and additive multiple discrimination than intersectional claims. This is because the central premise is that two or more grounds of discrimination are added together. Yet, as we have seen, taking an

<sup>59</sup> Schiek, “On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU),” 95.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Onufrio, “Intersectional discrimination in the European legal systems: Toward a common solution?” 126.

<sup>62</sup> Marie Mercat-Bruns, “Multiple discrimination and intersectionality: issues of equality and liberty,” *International Social Science Journal* 67, no. 223-224 (2017): 49.

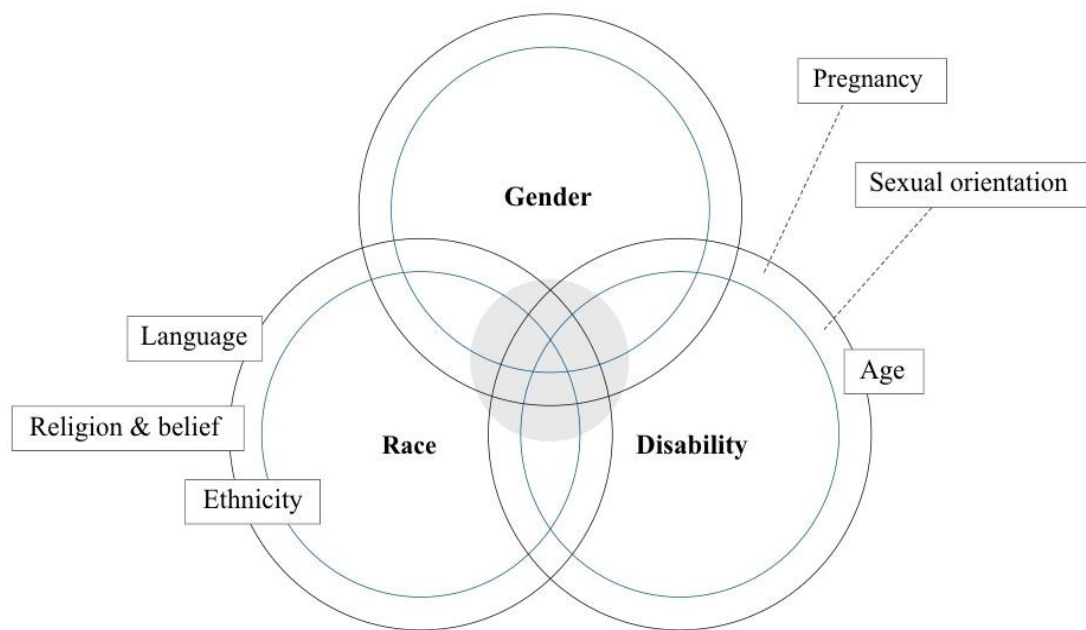
<sup>63</sup> European Commission, ‘Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (‘Racial Equality Directive’) and of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (‘Employment Equality Directive’)’ COM (2014) 2 final, para 4(4).

intersectional approach requires understanding that multiple sources of discrimination can overlap to create a ‘synergistic’ sort of disadvantage.

## 5.2 Reorganising EU equality law around the nodes of race, gender and disability

As an alternative to hierarchies and largely in response to the so-called ‘et cetera problem’ – that is, the seemingly infinite proliferation of discrimination grounds – Dagmar Schiek proposes a reorganising of anti-discrimination law around nodes, namely those of race, gender and disability.<sup>64</sup> This concept is best explained visually (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Nodes of discrimination<sup>65</sup>



As the above diagram illustrates, the three nodes each have a centre and an orbit. The three ‘centres’ each correspond to different rationales for discrimination, while the orbits of these nodes encompass discrimination grounds related to these rationales. Racist discrimination is generally based on the ascription of inferiority or otherness on the basis of certain external traits.<sup>66</sup> These can include a

<sup>64</sup> Schiek, “Organising EU Equality Law Around the Nodes of ‘Race’, Gender and Disability,” 11.

<sup>65</sup> Schiek, “On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU),” 88.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

person's skin colour, language, descent and national or ethnic origin for example. Religion can also become a token of racialisation to the extent that being perceived as Muslim (for example by wearing a hijab) can lead to being ascribed minority status, with severe consequences for social inclusion and market access.<sup>67</sup> Thus, one can locate these discrimination grounds on the periphery of the race node. The gender node is meant to capture the social processes that reaffirm male privilege.<sup>68</sup> These include for example stereotyping, the division of labour along predetermined lines, the organisation of society around a bi-gendered family unit and the emotionalisation and sexualisation of women.<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, discrimination on grounds of not fulfilling traditional gender expectations (such as on the basis of sexual orientation) should fall within the orbit of the gender node.<sup>70</sup> Finally, disability discrimination is generally based on limiting capabilities and opportunities by "standardising bodily, sensory, psychological and emotional normalcy".<sup>71</sup> An obvious connection to this node is age discrimination, which is incidentally the least protected ground in EU anti-discrimination law.<sup>72</sup>

From an intersectionality perspective, the main advantage of the nodes concept is that it considers overlap between different grounds to be the rule rather than the exception.<sup>73</sup> It would also provide an opportunity for EU law to address a multiplicity of grounds around these central nodes without necessarily having to create new subgroups. Despite all of the critique advanced in this paper, the reluctance of the European judiciary to acknowledge intersectional discrimination would be understandable if it were based on a reluctance to overcomplicate EU anti-discrimination law to a degree that would dilute the effectiveness of its prohibitions. Reorganising discrimination law around these nodes, as Schiek argues, would allow it to regain a certain focus and better accommodate intersectional discrimination.

In the *Parris* case, reliance on the nodes concept would have allowed the Court to recognise the gendered dimension of discrimination on the basis of sex-

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<sup>67</sup> G. Pitt, "Religion or belief: Aiming at the right target?" in *Equality Law in an Enlarged European Union*, ed. Helen Meenan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 226.

<sup>68</sup> Schiek, "Organising EU Equality Law Around the Nodes of 'Race', Gender and Disability," 23-24.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Schiek, "On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU)," 87.

<sup>72</sup> J. Fudge and A. Zbyszewska, "An Intersectional Approach to Age Discrimination in the European Union: Bridging Dignity and Distribution?" in *Age Discrimination and Labour Law: Comparative and Conceptual Perspectives in the EU and Beyond*, eds. Ann Numhauser-Henning and Mia Rönnmar (Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer Law International, 2015), 141-143.

<sup>73</sup> Schiek, "On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU)," 88.

ual orientation. As a consequence, the Court should have found that the justification under paragraph 2 of Article 6 of the Employment Equality Directive<sup>74</sup> does not apply due to the connection between discrimination related to the orbit of the gender node and age discrimination in this case.<sup>75</sup> In the cases of *Achbita* and *Bougnaoui*, it would also have allowed the Court and its AGs to recognise the situation of the applicants as situated at the intersection of race, gender and religion.<sup>76</sup>

### 5.3 The notion of ‘capacious grounds’: the approach of the CEDAW and the CRPD

Another possible way of addressing intersectionality within the EU’s existing framework is to take a ‘capacious’ view of discrimination grounds. This approach, advanced by Sandra Fredman, argues that even within a single discrimination ground, it is possible to take into account the complex power relations which function to exacerbate inequality.<sup>77</sup> At first glance this approach bears many similarities to the EU’s current single-axis approach to discrimination; however, it differs in that it suggests that all aspects of an individual’s identity be taken into account even within one ground.<sup>78</sup> For instance, if an ethnic minority woman were to be discriminated against in an intersectional manner and if she were to frame this as a gender discrimination case, a capacious understanding of gender would take into account other factors compounding her disadvantage such as her ethnicity. Similarly, if she were to bring a claim of racial discrimination forward, the fact that she is a woman should enhance her claim rather than impeding it.<sup>79</sup> This approach draws on the model of both the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>80</sup> and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)<sup>81</sup>. While these Conventions

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<sup>74</sup> Directive 2000/78/EC, art. 6, para. 2: “Notwithstanding Article 2(2), Member States may provide that the fixing for occupational social security schemes of ages for admission or entitlement to retirement or invalidity benefits, including the fixing under those schemes of different ages for employees or groups or categories of employees, and the use, in the context of such schemes, of age criteria in actuarial calculations, does not constitute discrimination on the grounds of age, provided that this does not result in discrimination on the grounds of sex.”

<sup>75</sup> Schiek, “On the uses, misuses and non-uses of intersectionality before the Court of Justice (EU),” 97.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>77</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 69.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (adopted 18 December 1979, entered into force 3 December 1981) 1249 UNTS 13 (CEDAW).

<sup>81</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (adopted 13 December 2006, entered into force 3 May 2008) 2515 UNTS 3 (CRPD).

appear to be ‘single axis’ because of their focus on women and persons with disabilities respectively, they acknowledge that certain groups of women and people with disabilities experience intersectional disadvantages.<sup>82</sup>

This approach has two important consequences. Firstly, it provides a solution to the so-called ‘et cetera problem’. Furthermore, it makes legislative amendment to include additional grounds of discrimination unnecessary. Of course, having a non-exhaustive list of grounds remains desirable as it gives Courts a certain flexibility to respond to changing contexts; however, taking a capacious view of single grounds would still allow for intersectionality to be accommodated within a fixed list.<sup>83</sup> Despite these benefits, this approach raises some practical issues, which still need further deliberation. One such issue concerns whether it would make a difference which ground is framed as the ‘lead ground’.<sup>84</sup> To use the aforementioned example, if an ethnic minority woman were to experience intersectional discrimination, would it make a difference if the case were litigated as a claim of gender discrimination or racial discrimination? This is further complicated by the structural obstacles to intersectional claims identified in section III of this paper. If, for example, this woman were to also have a disability and were to experience intersectional discrimination in the area of healthcare, she would advisably bring the claim under the Racial Equality Directive since this is the only way that EU law would cover her specific situation.

Despite these practical challenges, the notion of ‘capacious grounds’ is nonetheless useful. In *Parris*, while neither sexual orientation nor age discrimination could be established alone, a capacious single-ground analysis based on either of these grounds, which interpreted the exceptions narrowly and followed principles of burden of proof and proportionality, could have also allowed the intersectional claim to succeed.<sup>85</sup>

A good example of a case that takes a capacious view of a single ground is the 2008 *Coleman* case.<sup>86</sup> In this case, the applicant claimed that she had been subject to ‘discrimination by association’ after being harassed and treated unfavourably in her workplace for being the primary carer of her severely disabled son. The ECJ held that the principle of equal treatment set out in the Employment Equality Directive was not limited not only disabled persons themselves, but was intended “to combat all forms of discrimination on grounds of disability in the

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<sup>82</sup> Ivona Truscan and Joanna Bourke-Martignoni, “International Human Rights Law and Intersectional Discrimination,” *The Equal Rights Review* 16, no. 1 (2016): 110.

<sup>83</sup> Fredman, *Intersectional Discrimination in EU Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Law*, 70.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Atrey, “Illuminating the CJEU’s Blind Spot of Intersectional Discrimination,” 295.

<sup>86</sup> Case C-303/06 *S. Coleman v. Attridge Law and Steve Law* [2008] ECLI:EU:C:2008:415.



field of employment and occupation”.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the Court took a capacious interpretation of disability, which allowed it to address the specific discrimination experienced by the applicant, which was no doubt compounded by her gender and family status.<sup>88</sup>

Another example is the 2011 *Brachner* case<sup>89</sup>, which concerned an Austrian statutory provision that reserved an exceptional increase in pensions to those whose pensions exceeded €746.99 per month. The percentage of women disadvantaged by this provision was found to be more than two times higher than that of men. Consequently, the Court found for indirect gender discrimination against the intersectional group of older women. As evidenced by these cases, a capacious view of single grounds of discrimination can allow for the redress of intersectional discrimination.

## 6 Conclusion

Intersectional discrimination continues to be a highly challenging issue for EU anti-discrimination and equality law. Although attention to this issue has increased in recent years, intersectional experiences of disadvantage remain largely invisible, with most Courts preferring to take a single-axis approach to discrimination. This paper has argued that intersectionality theory is of great value in revealing the ways in which anti-discrimination laws tend to ignore those who exist at the *intersections* of different grounds of discrimination. Moreover, intersectionality theory is a useful analytical tool in that takes into account the myriad ways in which power operates.

Despite a growing recognition of the usefulness of this concept and an increasing awareness of differences between different types of ‘multiple discrimination’, the EU’s existing anti-discrimination legal framework prevents severe structural obstacles to intersectional claims, having separate directives, with differing scopes, differing justifications and exceptions and an exhaustive list of grounds. Added to this is the issue of finding an appropriate comparator in cases of intersectional discrimination and the fact that there is no clear definition of multiple discrimination, let alone intersectional discrimination in EU law. This makes it impossible to create new subgroups to reflect intersectional experiences and difficult to combine grounds. These difficulties are highlighted in the three cases analysed in this paper: *Parris v. Trinity College Dublin and Others* (2016),

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., para. 50.

<sup>88</sup> Schiek, “Organising EU Equality Law Around the Nodes of ‘Race’, Gender and Disability,” 17; Tamara Hervey et al., “Case C-303/06 Coleman v. Attridge Law and Steve Law Judgement of the ECJ 17 July 2008; Judgement of the Employment Tribunal, London, 30 September 2008: CASES,” *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 31, no. 3 (2009): 315.

<sup>89</sup> Case C-123/10 *Waltraud Brachner v. Pensionsversicherungsanstalt* [2011] E-CLI:EU:C:2011:675.

*Achbita v. G4S Secure Solutions NV* (2017) and *Bougnaoui v. Micropole SA* (2017). With particular reference to these cases, this paper has attempted to illustrate the challenges of addressing intersectional discrimination in the European Court of Justice and has argued that the Court has been largely unsuccessful in recognising intersectional discrimination when confronted with it.

Despite these challenges, this paper has argued that there is potential for intersectional experiences to be addressed within the EU's existing legal framework. The first option is to combine grounds within the existing list without regarding this as a new subgroup; however, it is argued that this approach is better suited to cases of sequential or additive multiple discrimination rather than intersectional discrimination. Another option, put forward by Dagmar Schiek, is to refocus EU anti-discrimination law around the nodes of race, gender and disability. This would allow for the Court to manage the proliferation of grounds of discrimination while enabling the law to respond adequately to different degrees of discrimination. The third option, which has been advanced by the CEDAW and the CRPD, entails taking a capacious view of existing grounds. This means acknowledging that even within a single ground, multiple intersecting power relations can be addressed.

Although it is possible, as this paper has argued, to incorporate the perspectives of intersectionality into EU law as it currently stands without requiring new amendments, it would be of considerable assistance if the scope and protection of the directives were to be harmonised. A clear, legally binding definition of the different strands of multiple discrimination would also improve the situation. Redressing intersectional inequalities is a challenging task and it is hoped that in the future the EU will make committed efforts to address all types of multiple discrimination, including intersectional discrimination, both in the legal sphere and in other policy domains.

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# ***Feeding Inequality:* Do EU Quality Schemes Do More Harm Than Good?**

*Joyce Pepe*

## **1 Introduction**

In the introduction to his book *Food is Culture*, Massimo Montanari makes the argument that food “takes shape as a decisive element of human identity” and “as one of the most effective means of expressing identity”.<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to appease the effects generated by the globalization process numerous regions and local communities around Europe have taken this approach literally, re-exploring traditional food products and, in many cases, investing them with such importance that their production and consumption have come to constitute the only source of local income and growth, feeding all community sectors: economic, social, tourism and cultural.

Over time, such efforts have been implemented with numerous other strategies and regulations at a European level, to safeguard local products from the competition of copycats and to prevent them from falling prey to the phenomena

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<sup>1</sup> Massimo Montanari, *Il cibo come cultura* (Roma: GLF editori Laterza, 2004), xii.

of food counterfeiting and food falsification. Among others, Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011<sup>2</sup>, was introduced in December 2014, with the aim of rendering it obligatory to indicate the country of origin or place of provenance. The article was, however, largely problematized in March 2018, as part of the *Stop Cibo Falso* (Stop False Food) campaign launched by Coldiretti, the leading Italian organization of farmers, as a consequence of the recent divulgation by the European Commission of a draft laying down new rules for the application of Article 26(3) of the same regulation. Proposing for the exclusion from the article of those food products labeled PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), the draft was reprimanded for being in direct contrast with the nature of the Article 26(3) itself, whose objective it is to render it obligatory to indicate the country of origin or place of provenance of food products. Having acknowledged the importance traditional food products play in local communities and the considerable damage the adoption of this draft could cause to producers as well as consumers and having ascertained the lack of academic investigation within this field, the paper sets out to tackle the following research question: How is the role played by traditional food products in local communities acknowledged by EU quality schemes?

The paper's purpose is to evaluate the contribution made by the European Union and the adoption of the PDO and PGI labels, under the EU quality policy, to the safeguard and protection of traditional food products. This will be carried out by analyzing the extent to which such initiatives and policies have been able to limit or halt the effects generated by the emergence of a globally integrated food system which is dominated by a few big and famous brands and have managed to reduce the existing inequalities.

In order to do so, the paper will be looking into Italy, which, with its 299 PDO and PGI labelled products, makes for the number one country for number of recognitions awarded by the EU to quality food products, and more specifically into the region Liguria and the case of Olio DOP Riviera Ligure. Selected out of a necessity of coming up with a case study in which the traditional product is little known and whose production only contributes with a small percentage to the values recorded for the overall Italian PDO and PGI market, the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure will be presented in the analysis part upon completion of the literature review and the methodology sections.

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, "Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011: on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004" (2011), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R1169&from=IT>.



Concerned with providing the reader with an insight into the current state of the arts, the literature review will be divided according to three subchapters and draw on books, reports as well as journal and newspapers' articles. The first subchapter will deal with the concept of food as a cultural and identity expression, how it emerged in the face of the industrial revolution and what role it has been covered with today by briefly looking into the case study of the Piedmont hazelnuts. The second subchapter chapter will present the phenomena of food counterfeiting and food falsification by researching the Italian case of Italian sounding and what initiatives have been taken at a European level to limit its repercussions. Space will also be given to addressing the problematics attached to the divulgation of the draft emanated by the European Commission on the exclusion of the PDO and PGI labels from the regulation and Coldiretti's response on the matter. Finally, the third subchapter will expand on the EU quality schemes, what they entail and what benefits or hindrances they have brought to producers and consumers. The second section, methodology, will offer the reader a general description of the empirical investigation and a more detailed justification and explanation of the selected case study, Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, before moving on to describing the adopted approach. Finally, drawing on the material published by the PDO Riviera Ligure Extra-Virgin Olive Oil Protection Consortium, the analysis section will attempt to provide the reader with an insight into the extent to which the labeling procedure, under the EU quality policy, has contributed to increasing its sales and its notoriety.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Using food to make a statement

"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are". Coined by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, famous French lawyer, in the 18th century, the quote was meant to establish a link between one's food choices and one's personality and identity.<sup>3</sup>

In the face of the emergence of a homogenized productive system, triggered by the onset of the industrial revolution in the 20th century, food really became a means of cultural affirmation, an external rupture element which enabled local communities and regions to differentiate themselves from the rest.<sup>4</sup>

In a world where, according to Dahlberg, the "dominant trend is towards a global industrial food system operating within an international trade regime that favors the industrial countries and reinforces trends towards standardization and uniformity", efforts were, and still are, made to rediscover local food products, in

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<sup>3</sup> Montanari, *Il cibo come cultura*, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

an attempt to tackle and counterbalance the effects produced by the necessity of simplifying and speeding up the procedures attached to food preparation and the tendency to universalize the types of food consumed, by bringing to the table a whole variety of different products.<sup>5</sup> Such attempts are largely to be attributed to the emergence of “new” actors, which, as transpires from an analysis published by Oxfam America, have been challenging the “production centered notions of power”.<sup>6</sup> Social movements, NGOs, but more importantly, civil society, having abandoned “a focus on the state in the pursuit of mobilizing consumer market power to force changes in the conditions of farmers, labor, animals and the environment” have made it their objective to, for one, create the necessary conditions to give a voice to these actors and, two, to bring decision-making about food back in the public sphere, where it can be debated by the whole community.<sup>7</sup> Such efforts have manifested themselves, among others, in an increased consumer demand for more informative labels, increased demands for organic foods or in the rise of fair trade networks, but not without its challenges.<sup>8</sup> Power, understood as “the ability to control one’s life chances”, appears to be accumulated and leveraged in each and every one of the eight food sectors accounted for by the report drafted for Oxfam America.<sup>9</sup> From the place in which consumers go to shop for their groceries, to where farmers sell their products, it looks as if a few firms dominate and are in control of all of such sectors, having taken over the role played by nation states, whose influence appears to have diminished to make space for new, private actors.<sup>10</sup>

This considered, a considerable number of local communities and regions in Europe have made greater efforts and endowed food with a new notable weight, by restoring its underlying traditions and its distinctive identificatory elements themselves. Under such circumstances, food has been turned into the one aspect on which members of these communities hinge on; from its production, to its preparation, to its consumption, food has become a means of self-sustainment and an instrument of self-representation.

The hazelnuts from Piedmont are a clear illustration of this. With 784 companies, 4860 tons and 3315 hectares, the production of the *nocciolo* has come to

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<sup>5</sup> Barilla Center For Food & Nutrition, “La dimensione culturale del cibo” (2009), <https://www.barillacfn.com/m/publications/pp-dimensione-culturale-cibo.pdf>, 5; Kenneth A. Dahlberg, “Democratizing Society and Food Systems: Or How Do We Transform Modern Structures of Power?,” *Agriculture and Human Values* 18 (2001): 139, accessed December 30, 2019, <https://link-1.springer-1com-1wx720nzv08c3.han.sub.uni-goettingen.de/content/pdf/10.1023/A:1011175626010.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Hendrickson et al., “The Global Food System and Nodes of Power: An Analysis Prepared for Oxfam America,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2008, 4, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1337273>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5, 14, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 8, 9.

constitute one of the largest economic resources of Piedmont.<sup>11</sup> However, it is fair to say that the impact generated by the hazelnut industry has not only affected larger and smaller size producers but has been felt at all levels of the local food chain. Evidence of this are, for example, local pastry chefs, whose production of sweets is highly dependent on the production of hazelnuts, or the various initiatives, such as the foundation of the Confraternita della Nocciola (Fraternity of the Hazelnut) back in the year 2000, which aims at using the reputation of the local product to boost the tourism industry and the yearly week-long hazelnut festival, which will take place for the 65<sup>th</sup> time this year, 2019, and whose organization involves, in one way or another, every member of that community.<sup>12</sup>

In light of these numbers and of the fact that many small-scale producers still function and produce in the shadow of larger firms, such as Ferrero, it seems vital to provide these products with the appropriate measures to ensure their safeguard and protection from the damage produced by the monopoly of the market by part of a few leading firms and the resulting phenomena of food counterfeiting and food falsification.

## 2.2 Food falsification, *Italian sounding* and attempts to limit their effects

Different studies were conducted between the 1980s and 1990s, in an attempt to examine the “relative contribution of recipe and name components toward influencing the perceived ethnicity of ethnic foods”.<sup>13</sup> Concerned with testing how adding an Italian theme to the overall restaurant experience could change customers’ perceptions on ethnicity, acceptability and selection of foods, Bell and Meiselman’s experiment set out to run two restaurant services on two different days under two different disguises, one British and one Italian, whilst offering the same food items, in the first case listed in English and, in the second, in Italian. The data recorded by the two researchers, seems to evidence a significant degree of change. For starters, it appeared that the addition of an Italian theme contributed to an increase in the selection of items deemed to be Italian, such as pasta, secondly, it contributed to an increase in faith among customers which resulted in them opting for certain food items over others because of the assumption that they were in a genuine Italian restaurant and, lastly, in the final judgment on the overall food experience.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Consorzio Tutela Nocciola Piemonte, “Raccolta E Produzione,” accessed May 7, 2019, <https://www.nocciolapiemonte.it/raccolta-e-produzione/>.

<sup>12</sup> Confraternita della nocciola, “La Confraternita,” accessed May 15, 2019, <http://confraternitanocciola.net/la-confraternita/>.

<sup>13</sup> R. Bell et al., “Effects of Adding an Italian Theme to a Restaurant on the Perceived Ethnicity, Acceptability, and Selection of Foods,” *Appetite* 22, no. 1 (1994): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1006/appe.1994.1002>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Adding an ethnic component or theme to a certain food item or product seems to have effects on customers' perceptions and food selection that go far beyond the scope of a smaller scale study conducted back in 1994. Efforts to counterfeit food are a clear example of this, in that they exploit the apparent relation there is between food labeling and consumers' perceptions to their own advantage.

Nowadays, food counterfeiting stands to signify "the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition tampering or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients or food packaging, labelling, product information, or false or misleading statements made about a food product", by means of falsely producing labels that report images, words and symbols which establish a deliberate association with the country of origin.<sup>15</sup> Whilst this issue, in one way or another, affects the "entire European agro-food sector", its effects have had a stronger impact on Italy, where the phenomenon has made itself known under the term *Italian sounding*.<sup>16</sup>

Being that it drew and still draws highly on the experience and knowledge of former Italian emigrants, the phenomenon of *Italian sounding* can, consequently, be said to have spread mainly in those countries where these people set up their communities.

In a recent survey conducted in the USA and reported by Carreno and Vergano, it was found that when confronted with two different packs of parmesan cheese produced in the country, only the second one depicting a picture of the Italian flag, as much as 38% of the consumers surveyed argued that the first product originated from Italy and up to 67% responded the same for the second product.<sup>17</sup> Not only does this data ring bells on the evident link there is between the existence and use of elements which recall a country's origin and one's influence, as had already been shown by the Bell and Meiselman's experiment, but it also generates a troublesome outlook on the possible implications this might have on a number of sectors.

To mention the economic sector, in a study conducted by Assocamere Estero, the Association for the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad, in 2016, it shines through that, in view of the 50-60 billion Euros turnover of the agri-food market, there could be a potential growth equal to 20 billion Euros.<sup>18</sup> *Potential* because

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<sup>15</sup> Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, ed., "The Counterfeiting in the Food Sector - Consumer Guide: How You Can Learn More to Be Better Prepared," (2013): 3, accessed April 29, 2019, [http://www.uibm.gov.it/attachments/no\\_to\\_fake\\_food.pdf](http://www.uibm.gov.it/attachments/no_to_fake_food.pdf); Ignacio Carreno and Paolo R. Vergano, "Geographic Indications, Food Fraud and the Fight Against Italian Sounding Products," *European Journal of Risk Regulation (EJRR)* 7 (2016): 416, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ejrr2016&id=436&div=57&collection=journals>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

<sup>17</sup> Carreno and Vergano, "Geographic Indications, Food Fraud and the Fight against Italian Sounding Products," 418.

<sup>18</sup> Senato della Repubblica, "Lotta alla contraffazione e tutela del made in Italy: Documento di analisi n. 5" (2017), [https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg17/attachments/documento/files/000/028/559/DA05\\_-\\_Lotta\\_alla\\_contraffazione\\_e\\_tutela\\_del\\_made\\_in\\_Italy\\_DEF.pdf](https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg17/attachments/documento/files/000/028/559/DA05_-_Lotta_alla_contraffazione_e_tutela_del_made_in_Italy_DEF.pdf), 15.

of the countereffects produced by the *Italian sounding* phenomenon which, as estimated by the data provided by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development, has contributed to a general turnover of 55 billion Euros, almost twice as much as the numbers registered for the Italian food exports that same year, 2012.<sup>19</sup> If one combines *Italian sounding* with its counterpart, the phenomenon of food fraud, which, as was mentioned beforehand, refers to the falsification of a certain food item in its entirety, these numbers would have reached 60 billion back in 2010, when the total turnover of the Italian food industry amounted to 132 billion, just its double.<sup>20</sup>

Efforts have been made to somehow limit the effects produced by food frauds and food falsification, at both a national as well as at a European level. At a European level, regulation (EU) 1169/2011 entered into application on 13 December 2014 with the aim of attaining a “high level of consumer protection”.<sup>21</sup> Article 26 of the 1169/2011 regulation addresses the obligation to indicate the country of origin or place of provenance for those cases “where failure to indicate this might mislead the consumer as to the true country of origin or place of provenance of the food” and “where the country of origin or the place of provenance of a food is given and where it is not the same as that of its primary ingredient”.<sup>22</sup> In spite of the good resolutions anticipated by article 26 there is a series of problematics attached, one of these having to do with the draft of the EU Commission on the Regulation on the provision of voluntary indication of origin or place of provenance of foods (Ares(2018)34773). While the draft reiterates the importance and the validity of the points discussed under article 26, it, simultaneously, proposes for an exclusion of those food items which fall under the scope of the Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 and the Directive (EU) No 2015/2436, respectively addressing those food products which have been labeled PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) as part of the EU quality policy and those whose names have been registered trademarks.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Federalimentare, “La posizione dell'industria Alimentare Italiana rispetto alla contraffazione ed al fenomeno dell'Italian Sounding,” [http://www.federalimentare.it/new2016/AreeOperative/Pro-mozione\\_Internazionalizzazione/ItalianSounding.pdf](http://www.federalimentare.it/new2016/AreeOperative/Pro-mozione_Internazionalizzazione/ItalianSounding.pdf), 2.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission, “Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011”; European Commission, “Food Information to Consumers - Legislation,” accessed May 11, 2019, [https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling\\_nutrition/labelling\\_legislation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation_en).

<sup>22</sup> European Commission, “Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011”.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, “COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2018/775 of 28 May 2018: laying down rules for the application of Article 26(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, as regards the rules for indicating the country of origin or place of provenance of the primary ingredient of a food” (2018), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R0775&from=IT>.

As a result, the draft has been heavily criticized for betraying the spirit of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011.<sup>24</sup> Following its publication, numerous institutions and federations mobilized, in an effort to halt its spreading, by providing their feedback on the official page on the Commission Implementing Regulation. Coldiretti, the leading Italian organization of farmers at a national and European level, launched a proper campaign back in March 2018, Stop Cibo Falso (Stop False Food), calling the exclusion of these food items from the 1169/2011 regulation unjustified and demanding of the EU to step up its game and ensure the level of information that was promised consumers in the original version of the document.<sup>25</sup> The preservation of the integrity of EU quality label schemes constitutes for Italian smaller-scale producers a necessity, for their culture and economy depends on it, but what are the benefits which have been brought by them?

### 2.3 EU quality schemes

The first European legislation on geographical indications and protected designation of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs was launched by the European Union in 1992 in an attempt to safeguard and promote the unique characteristics of local products. Drawing on the example of the Italian DOC (Denominazione d'Origine Controllata) and the French AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée), the EU quality policy emerged in a historical context in which the necessity to overcome the repercussions generated by the globalization process was ever growing.<sup>26</sup> The EU started to see in the quality of local products, defined as “one of the decisive elements in the competitiveness of companies”, the real and only true weapon to counter the effects produced by the globalization of markets.<sup>27</sup> This considered and in line with its efforts to give consumers more transparency and to reward producers' persistence in keeping up with the traditions

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Coldiretti, “Stop Cibo Falso: Chiediamo All'europa Di Difendere La Nostra Salute E Tutelare Il Meglio Del Cibo Italiano,” accessed March 24, 2019, <http://www.stopcibofalso.coldiretti.it/> Coldiretti, “Osservazioni Coldiretti: relative alla bozza di Regolamento di esecuzione della Commissione che stabilisce le norme per l'applicazione dell'articolo 26, par. 3 del reg. n. 1169 del 2011 per quanto riguarda le norme per l'indicazione del Paese d'origine o luogo di provenienza dell'ingrediente primario di un alimento laddove differente da quello dato per l'alimento (Ares, 2018, 34773).” (2018).

<sup>26</sup> Agnieszka Hajdukiewicz, “European Union Agri-Food Quality Schemes for the Protection and Promotion of Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialities: An Economic Perspective,” *Folia Horticulturae* 26, no. 1 (2014): 4, accessed April 6, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2478/fhort-2014-0001>, <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/fhort.2014.26.issue-1/fhort-2014-0001/fhort-2014-0001.pdf>; Tilman Becker, “European Food Quality Policy: The Importance of Geographical Indications, Organic Certification and Food Quality Assurance Schemes in European Countries,” *The Estey Centre Journal of International Law and Trade Policy* 10, no. 1 (2009): 112, accessed April 6, 2019, <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/48796/files/becke10-1.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Massimiliano Benelli and Luca Cianforri, “La Politica Di Qualità Dei Prodotti Agricoli E Alimentari Dell'unione Europea,” *Istituzioni del federalismo: rivista di studi giuridici e politici*,

and culture involved in the production of their food items, the EU quality policy introduced two distinct labels: PDO and PGI.

Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) 1151/2012 specifies that PDO is a label that refers to certain “agricultural products and foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognized know-how”.<sup>28</sup> The same article defines the PGI label as one which “covers agricultural products and foodstuffs closely linked to the geographical area”.<sup>29</sup>

Numerous are the benefits which have been generated since the implementation of the PDO and PGI labels, under the EU quality policy. According to the report drafted by ISMEA, the Italian Institute of Food Services for the Agricultural Market, in 2018, the labeling of the 299 Italian food items under the EU quality policy boosted the export growth of such products by +234% in 10 years, producing a weight on the overall agri-food sector of 18% and producing an economic return for all 20 Italian regions.<sup>30</sup>

There are, however, a number of issues related to the labeling procedure and the nature of the labeling itself which have been raised and have been cause for doubt. One of these issues has to do with the implications of setting up a labeling system where quality is central. In a race towards having their food products granted a quality label, producers might enter a vicious cycle in which the excessive recognition of food items as PDO or PGI has the opposite effect: food items no longer stand out as different but are grouped into a category of elitist products whose traditional characteristics become concealed and where the market is in the hands of a few.<sup>31</sup> It is under such circumstances and in light of what has been contested by the IPES, the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, which has argued for a reformation of current EU quality schemes “to ensure the effective protection of common cultural heritage, and avoid the monopolization of these schemes by a few large producers” that this paper wishes to

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2015, 125, accessed April 12, 2019, [https://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/affari\\_ist/Supplemento%20\\_2015/Benelli.pdf](https://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/affari_ist/Supplemento%20_2015/Benelli.pdf)

Gervasio Antonelli and Elena Viganò, “Il Ruolo Dei Marchi Di Qualità Dell'unione Europea Nelle Strategie Competitive Delle Piccole E Medie Imprese Agroalimentari Italiane,” *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, no. 3 (2012): 31, accessed April 6, 2019, <http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/index.php/piccola/article/viewFile/31/38>; European Commission, “Working document on A European Quality Promotion Policy or The European way towards Excellence” (1995), <http://aei.pitt.edu/35066/1/A1165.pdf>, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

Massimiliano Benelli and Luca Cianforri, “La politica di qualità dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari dell'Unione europea,” 135.

<sup>29</sup> Hajdukiewicz, “European Union agri-food quality schemes for the protection and promotion of geographical indications and traditional specialities: an economic perspective,” 4.

<sup>30</sup> ISMEA, “Rapporto 2018 ISMEA - Qualivita: sulle produzioni agroalimentari e vitivinicole italiane DOP, IGP e STG” (2018), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Il Sole 24 Ore, “Record Di Dop E Igp Italiani. Ma È Davvero Un Bene Per L'agroalimentare?,” *Il Sole 24 Ore*, March 30, 2016, accessed April 29, 2019, [https://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2016/03/30/record-di-dop-e-igp-italiani-ma-e-un-davvero-bene-per-lagroalimentare/?refresh\\_ce=1](https://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2016/03/30/record-di-dop-e-igp-italiani-ma-e-un-davvero-bene-per-lagroalimentare/?refresh_ce=1).

test the extent to which the EU can be argued to acknowledge the role played by traditional food products in local communities.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.4 Case selection: Olio DOP Riviera Ligure

In describing how the analysis will be approached, this section will, firstly, justify the decision to make the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure the case study of this paper. Secondly, it will provide the reader with an illustration of the case and document selection and a description of the adopted method.

According to the data gathered by ISMEA, cheese has accounted for 51% of the total export value of PDO and PGI products in 2017 and for 57% of the total value of production of PDO and PGI products for the Italian agri-food sector.<sup>33</sup> If these numbers do not sound remarkable, let us consider the values registered for Parmigiano Reggiano DOP and Grana Padano DOP. Respectively, accounting for 33,2% and 40,0% of the total export value of PDO and PGI cheese products, these two together make up for 58% of the volume and 65% of the value of the total amount of sales in the PDO and PGI cheese industry.<sup>34</sup> This would make both Parmigiano Reggiano DOP and Grana Padano DOP among the most important products for the overall PDO and PGI market in Italy, in line with what has emerged from an analysis conducted by Confagri and reported by *Il Sole 24 Ore*: 91% of the total export generated by the Italian PDO and PGI market is at the hands of the first ten Italian PDO and PGI brands.<sup>35</sup> It seems natural, under such circumstances to raise questions and concerns as to the extent to which those traditional products produced in smaller manufacturing industries and protected by less renowned consortia are actually acknowledged and safeguarded. If the market is in the hands of a few, what will become of the remaining 289 PDO and PGI products?

In this paper's attempt to identify a case study which proves to be in line with its efforts to corroborate whether and how the EU acknowledges the role played by traditional food products, two criteria were adopted. In the first place, an effort was made to look into those food sectors which only contribute with a small percentage to the values recorded for the PDO and PGI market. This was carried out by looking into the data provided by ISMEA. The recorded numbers all pointed to the olive oil sector, for it only accounted for 1,6% of the total export value of PDO and PGI products and for 1% of the total value of production of PDO and

<sup>32</sup> IPES FOOD, "Towards a common food policy for the European Union: The policy reform and realignment that is required to build sustainable food systems in Europe" (2019), [http://www.ipes-food.org/\\_img/upload/files/CFP\\_FullReport.pdf](http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_FullReport.pdf), 93.

<sup>33</sup> ISMEA, "Rapporto 2018 ISMEA - Qualivita," 20, 22.

<sup>34</sup> ISMEA, "Rapporto 2018 ISMEA - Qualivita," 24, 70.

<sup>35</sup> Giorgio dell'Orefice, "Dop&Igp: Riconoscimenti Per Tutti Ma Vero Business Solo Per Pochi," *Il Sole 24 Ore*, accessed May 27, 2019, <http://www.agrisole.ilsole24ore.com/art/mercati/2018-04-26/dopigp-riconoscimenti-tutti-ma-vero-business-solo-pochi-143244.php?uuid=AEON7zeE>.



PGI products for the Italian agri-food sector.<sup>36</sup> In the second place, in an attempt to attest the economic impact held by PDO and PGI products on individual regions in Italy, it seemed useful to look into those regions which, given that they only count with very few products labeled PDO and PGI, occupy the lower ranks of the scale. Given that there is a significant lack of material for the regions Basilicata and Molise, which respectively occupy position 19 and 20, region Liguria, which occupies position number 18, was taken as the most suitable one.

Consequently, in view of what has emerged from the above-mentioned results and in an effort to combine the two criteria, this paper has deemed the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure as the most suitable case study.

## 2.5 Approach to analysis

The analysis of the case study will be conducted in the following way. Firstly, space will be given to investigating the extent to which the labeling of the Olio Riviera Ligure with the European PDO label, under the EU quality policy, has contributed to an increase of its production, the production value, the consumer value and the export value. This will be done by looking into the data collected by both ISMEA and the PDO Riviera Ligure Extra-Virgin Olive Oil Protection Consortium. In the second place, in an attempt to verify the role played by the national institutions and the local consortium in contributing to improving consumers' knowledge of the product and the product's positioning among its counterparts, abetted by larger consortia, space will be given to analyzing the projects advanced under the Rural Development Program 2014/2020 run by Regione Liguria and what role they have played in promoting the local product at a national, European and worldwide level.

## 3 Analysis

With 242 olive growers, 30 millers and 43 bottlers the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure can be argued to involve a considerable number of actors, from the harvesting of the olives to the production of the olive oil.<sup>37</sup> This becomes especially visible when compared with the Terra di Bari DOP, which, despite of it appearing to occupy the number one position on the list drafted by ISMEA in 2018, reporting for sales numbers and quantity of olive oil produced, only counts with 176 olive growers, 15 millers and 33 bottlers.<sup>38</sup> Numbers, however do not seem to match: as a matter of fact, while the Terra di Bari DOP weighs with 37,7% on the total number of tonnes of DOP olive oil produced back in 2017, the Riviera Ligure

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<sup>36</sup> ISMEA, "Rapporto 2018 ISMEA - Qualivita," 20, 22.

<sup>37</sup> ISMEA, "Oli di oliva" (2000).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

DOP only accounts for 3,2% of the total amount. Similar data can be accounted for the value of production, 29,2% vs. 5,3%, consumer value, 29,0% vs. 5,1% and export value, 34,8% vs. 0,6%.<sup>39</sup> Numbers appear even more problematic if compared with the year 2016: for all of the four variables there is a percentage loss that ranges between 50% and 30%.<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning that, since the registration of the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure as a PDO product in 1997, numbers have shown significant increase. Starting with the harvesting year 2002/2003, as a matter of fact, the total amount of olive oil on the market had almost tripled, from 2.803,48 for the year 2001/2002 to 6.287,00 the next year, keeping the average between 3.500 and 5.500 for the 4 years which followed.<sup>41</sup>

While these results might have been the outcome of some lucky harvest reasons or the lack thereof, they, nevertheless, raise questions as to how the labeling procedure, under the EU quality policy, might have contributed to these numbers.<sup>42</sup> Or is it something else?

The Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) 2014-2020 were set up by the European Union in an effort to invest in rural jobs and growth, ensure the “sustainable management of natural resources” and to achieve “a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities”.<sup>43</sup> As part of this policy, the EU provided member states with 118 RDPs and over €99.6 billion for their implementation.<sup>44</sup> With respect to the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, four actions were launched in 2019 by the Consortium with the aim of valorizing the denomination of the product and reaffirm the region Liguria as one dedicated to agricultural production and olive-growing of quality, under the RDP:

- 1) Increasing the knowledge of the quality of the PDO product by means of training consumers, restaurateurs and students attending hotel schools
- 2) Repositioning the certified product with relation to others
- 3) Spreading the identity of the product and its reputation by means of social media

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<sup>39</sup> ISMEA, “Rapporto 2018 ISMEA - Qualivita,” 32.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Consorzio Per La Tutela Dell'Olio Extra Vergine Di Oliva D.O.P Riviera Ligure, “OLIO EXTRA VERGINE DI OLIVA D.O.P. RIVIERA LIGURE IN COMMERCIO” (2019, ), <http://www.oliorivieraligure.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/190409.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Alessandro Giacobbe, “The Harvest and Certification for the 2016-2017 Oil Production Season,” accessed May 18, 2019, <http://www.oliorivieraligure.it/en/2017/02/10/la-raccolta-la-certificazione-la-campagna-olearia-2016-2017/>.

<sup>43</sup> European Commission, “The Common Agricultural Policy: Investing in Rural Europe” (2013), [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/common/rdp-factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/common/rdp-factsheet_en.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

- 4) Valorizing the touristic aspect of the PDO product by arranging events such as “open olive-grove”.<sup>45</sup>

Drawing on the data recorded as part of an investigation conducted by Ipsos-Enit, from which transpires that food is the motive which pushes one tourist out of two, 48%, to travel to Italy, Italian consortia have made it one of their goals to promote their local and traditional PDO and PGI labelled products.<sup>46</sup> According to a study conducted by Qualivita in 2018, the proposals advanced by Italian consortia in an effort to bring into life what is known as *Turismo DOP*, already counted with 210 events, 17 experiences, 160 itineraries and 600 cultural heritage sites.<sup>47</sup>

In concrete terms, this has meant, for the Consortium for the Protection of the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, the organization of initiatives which foment its promotion and valorize its quality under the tourism industry. Project *Horeca*, which was launched in the beginning of April, for example, exploits the link there is between the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure and the catering industry by organizing technical oil tastings at four different renowned restaurants in Northern Italy over the period of three months. The *Hotel School* project, launched in February 2019 has, on the other hand, entailed, the setting up of 90 different laboratories over 25 institutes, in which the students are to follow an educational path which will end with the *Young Chef* contest, during which students will have to come up with original recipes, based on the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, that will, consequently, be shared on social media in an effort to promote the use of genuine products with guaranteed quality standards and origins.<sup>48</sup>

Because of the recent nature of the initiatives it proves too ambitious to make a numerical estimate of the benefits such actions and events will have brought to local producers and the traditional products in the long run, just now. Nevertheless, the words spoken by Carlo Siffredi, President of the PDO Riviera Ligure Olive Oil Protection Consortium, in 2018, when the campaign was launched, already provide an evaluation of the extent to which the various activities organized by the consortium have impacted the overall production system.

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<sup>45</sup> Qualivita, “L’olio Riviera Ligure DOP Rilancia La Liguria Agroalimentare Di Qualità,” accessed May 18, 2019, <https://www.qualivita.it/news/lolio-riviera-ligure-dop-rilancia-la-liguria-agroalimentare-di-qualita/>.

<sup>46</sup> Patrizio Roversi, “Il Paese Falce E Coltello,” *la Repubblica*, September 27, 2018, accessed May 19, 2019, <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2018/09/27/il-paese-falce-e-coltello54.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Wine News, “Qualivita: Le Produzioni Dop E Igp Hanno Un Ruolo Strategico Nel Turismo Del Belpaese,” accessed May 19, 2019, [https://winenews.it/it/qualivita-le-produzioni-dop-e-igp-hanno-un-ruolo-strategico-nel-turismo-del-belpaese\\_374085/](https://winenews.it/it/qualivita-le-produzioni-dop-e-igp-hanno-un-ruolo-strategico-nel-turismo-del-belpaese_374085/).

<sup>48</sup> Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, “La DOP Riviera Ligure,” accessed May 28, 2019, <http://www.oliorivieraligure.it/psr-2014-2020/>.

The PDO Riviera Ligure and the activity of the protection Consortium have achieved important results for both our territory and consumers: on the one hand, the recovery of olive tree groves (linked to guaranteed profitability for farmers), on the other hand the improved quality of olive oil deriving from the development of the protected designation of origin – which implies control, tasting, certification and guarantee of EVO.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that these words are exclusively appreciative of the role played by the activities of the consortium draws attention to the contributions made by the European Union and the EU quality schemes in promoting those PDO and PGI products which have originated from smaller scale production sites and under less renowned labels, such as the Olio DOP Riviera Ligure, or the lack thereof. Whilst it can be argued that EU quality schemes have most definitely made a positive contribution to the Italian food market in that, through their PDO and PGI labels, they have generated a considerable economic gain for the Italian agri-food market, the successful promotion of local products, or rather perception thereof, has mostly to thank the initiatives launched by regional consortia. EU quality schemes, or the RDPs, have been successful to the extent that they have set out to trigger a change by, in the one case, setting out the rules needed for the labeling procedure and, in the other, by supporting the cause economically. The EU has acknowledged and acknowledges the role played by traditional food products in local communities to the extent that it sustains them and the respective consortia economically and normatively, but it lacks the social and cultural strength of action which local communities are invested with and which little known products need to keep existing. To acknowledge is one thing, but to understand is another. It is under such circumstances that this paper calls for a stricter collaboration between the EU and local actors, one in which the contributions made by the European Union are not limited to the normative and economic sectors only, but which turns it into an actor worthy of holding the same spot as the local consortia. Perhaps then will the remaining 289 PDO and PGI products be invested with the same importance as the leading ones and become known to the world.

## 4 Conclusion

Food can play an important role in the life of some. In a way, when we cook, when we consume food, when we produce the primary ingredients which make up our dishes, unless we take our food directly out of a package and place it in a

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<sup>49</sup> Alessandro Giacobbe, “The PDO Riviera Ligure Olive Oil Consortium Aims at Promotion in the Horeca Industry and Young Chefs’ Training,” accessed May 28, 2019, <http://www.oliorivieraligure.it/en/2018/04/24/consorzio-olio-dop-riviera-ligure-horeca-istituti-alberghieri/>.

microwave, we are narrating a story which deserves to be told and protected. The voice and actions of farmers, small-scale producers, local communities and consortia, have, in a way, contributed to keeping this narrative going, but not without the help of larger institutions such as the European Union. While numerous are the initiatives which have been undertaken to protect local and traditional food products from the effects generated by phenomena such as food counterfeiting and falsification, in some cases they have appeared to have casted more doubts as to their efficacy than other.

How is the role played by traditional food products in local communities acknowledged by EU quality schemes? This was the question raised in the introduction to this paper. Now, to give an answer, it is clear that the EU quality schemes, among other strategies implemented to promote local food products' characteristics and limit the effects of food counterfeiting, have most definitely contributed to generating a significant economic gain for those Italian larger-scale producers of the ten PDO and PGI products which are worth 80% of the total production and 90% of the export value, but it is in disregard of those that make up for the remaining 20% and 10%. Actions are needed which enable the advancement of those PDO and PGI products which have fallen into the cracks and it is here that activities launched at a local and regional level have proven to be crucial. Because to acknowledge is different than to understand, traditional food products are in need of actors which will go one step further and will try to listen to their narrative, but to do so one needs to be close enough, and it appears that the EU is not.

It is under these circumstances and with an eye to possible further collaborations between the EU and local institutions that this paper hopes to have offered enough inputs for both the consideration of a revision of the role played by the EU quality schemes at a local level by the European Union and for the opening up of a new research field.

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**Part 2.**

**Material bases of inequality and solidarity**

# **A broader concept of Water Diplomacy: The European Union role in Gaza water-led humanitarian crisis**

*Irene Signorelli*

## **1 Introduction: the concept of Water Diplomacy and its limits**

Water is a multifaceted resource which allocation, management and access directly influence the well-being of populations and societies worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Given its pivotal function in all fields of human action, water has many use and therefore many users. The repartition between usages, stakeholders and interests on such indispensable but still limited resource comport a certain level of conflict.<sup>2</sup> Water disputes dates back far away in history: the very first “international water treaty” settled the dispute between two Sumerian city-states over the Tigris River in 2500 BC.<sup>3</sup>

Nowadays the level of complexity has grown with the multiplication of stakeholders and interests to a global scale and the dangers posed by climate crisis

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<sup>1</sup> The Hague Institute for Global Justice, “The Multi-Track Water Diplomacy Framework: A Legal and Political Economy Analysis for Advancing Cooperation over Shared Waters,” (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Shafiqul Islam and Amanda C. Repella, “Water Diplomacy: A Negotiated Approach to Manage Complex Water Problems,” *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education*, no. 155 (July 2015): 1.

<sup>3</sup> Magdy A. Henfy, “Water Politics in the Middle East: A Context for Conflict or Cooperation? Technical Paper,” (UNESCO, November 2011), 28.

currently undergoing. Consequently, the resolution of disputes, as well the decision making process related to a wise allocation of water, require to unlock an appropriate set of tools, actor's agency and values. Indeed, water problems cross different domains, from jurisdictional to natural, different space sections (from micro-territorial to international) and requires different expertise to be resolved efficiently (scientific, political, legal, technical, social etc.).<sup>4</sup>

Inside this overall scenario of complexity and urgency, can be inserted the current Water Diplomacy debate. The concept of Water Diplomacy is itself a complicated matter. By simply analyzing the combination of terms, Water Diplomacy can be defined as "a branch of diplomacy, applied to bilateral and multilateral negotiations on water issues between and among states".<sup>5</sup>

With this meaning, Water Diplomacy mainly takes in account different national state's interests over the partition of basin, river or other water sources with other nations. In this sense, the term coincides with the one of "Transboundary Water Management", the puts the accent on the involvement of higher political entities into the process of negotiation over the allocation, quality and quantity of shared water between two (or more) States.<sup>6</sup>

In 2016, 151 States and 2.8 billion of people shared water coming from 286 transboundary river basins.<sup>7</sup> Dialogue and cooperation between neighboring States are therefore fundamental for every Government that consider granting water's rights to its citizens as an obligation.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, water scarcity predictions are imposing even more pressure on the already delicate issue of sharing water. According to the UN World Water Development Report (2018) already in 2025 almost 2 billion people will experience life conditions under absolute water scarcity, and 2/3 of the world's territory will be affected by water stress.<sup>9</sup>

The environmental concern together with the need of providing safe hydrological sources to their citizen, led States toward a process of "securitization" of water, i.e. policies, political actions and international commitment that acknowledged water resources as strategic goods that are essential to State's survival.<sup>10</sup> In this contest, the call for new mechanism that can respond both technically and politically to the future water challenges, rose the level of attention over the field

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<sup>4</sup> Islam and Repella, "Water Diplomacy: A Negotiated Approach to Manage Complex Water Problems": 5.

<sup>5</sup> Henfy, "Water Politics in the Middle East: A Context for Conflict or Cooperation?", 20.

<sup>6</sup> Kata Molnar et al., "Preventing Conflicts, Fostering Cooperation - the Many Roles of Water Diplomacy," (SIWI, 19 December 2017), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>9</sup> The Hague Institute for Global Justice, "The Multi-track Water Diplomacy Framework".

<sup>10</sup> Molnar et al., "Preventing Conflicts, Fostering Cooperation - The many Roles of Water Diplomacy", 16.

Water Diplomacy, as instrument for achieving specific national interests. Therefore, Water Diplomacy usually refers to top-down, hard politics scheme for intra-national water disputes. The main goal is to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, conceptualizing water as a possible security threat.

However, as several authors remarks, “war over water”<sup>11</sup> is more a myth than reality. Numerus quantitative studies proved that violent intrastate conflicts with water as main *casus belli* water have never occurred so far.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, cooperation between two States outnumber open conflict by 2/3 when water allocation is concerned.<sup>13</sup> The association between worsening water scarcity and the outcome of war is much more diffuse within the public discourse rather than academic literature.

But this doesn’t mean that water is not a cause of conflict at all. First of all, cooperation among States might conceal unfair power imbalances. The state with stronger economic and military capability (also defined as hydro-hegemon) often impose the solution that suits the best its national interests on the other riparian states, who are forced to comply with arrangements that not necessarily ensure the adequate distribution of water – the case of Gaza is a striking example.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, water can represent a “conflict multiplier”.<sup>15</sup> The type of conflict that is most likely to break out due to water scarcity are civil unrests, violent protests and hostilities between subnational actors not international ones.<sup>16</sup> The intensity of the conflict is generally reversely related to the geographical scale.

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<sup>11</sup> UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), “The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind,” (2019), 17. See also: Alexander Carius, Geoffrey D. Dabelko and Aaron T. Wolf, “Water, Conflict, and Cooperation: POLICY BRIEF,” (7 July 2011); The United Nations and Environmental Security: Recommendations for the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-united-nations-and-environmental-security-recommendations-for-the-secretary-generals>; CNA, “THE ROLE of WATER STRESS in INSTABILITY and CONFLICT,” (December 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Aaron T. Wolf, “Conflict and Cooperation Along International Waterways,” *Water Policy* 1, no. 2 (1998) For more examples see: Charlotte Grech-Madin et al., “Negotiating Water Across Levels: A Peace and Conflict “Toolbox” for Water Diplomacy,” *Journal of Hydrology* 559 (2018): 101; Research Paper.

<sup>13</sup> Carius, Dabelko and Wolf, “Water, Conflict, and Cooperation”, 60.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Vink, “The Role of Water Diplomacy in Peacebuilding,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, ed. Swain Ashok and Joakim Öjendal, 283–95 (New York, United States: Routledge, 2018), 286.

<sup>15</sup> Swain Ashok and Joakim Öjendal, “Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding: An Introduction,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, ed. Swain Ashok and Joakim Öjendal, 1–13 (New York, United States: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1–3.; CNA, “The Role Of Water Stress In Instability And Conflict”, 21. See also: Carius, Dabelko and Wolf, “Water, Conflict, and Cooperation”. Moreover, very remarkably the Pacific Institute offers on a live tool that chronologically enlist conflicts related with water from the first historical reports until nowadays: Pacific Institute, “Water Conflict Chronology,” [http://www.worldwater.org/conflict/map/\\*](http://www.worldwater.org/conflict/map/*) (accessed May 15, 2019).

Developing countries are the most affected ones: agriculture-based economies, weak infrastructures, lack of skills or know-how needed to a wiser water management, unsettled ethnic or religious clashes can lead to major fights over the distribution of natural resources.

Completing the vicious circle, water scarcity is also one of major factor of poverty and under-development that can further intensify the struggles to compete for such extremely valuable resource.<sup>17</sup>

From Algerian cyclical demonstrations after the cut off of the public water supply, to the rise of water black market in Zimbabwe selling contaminated water in the poor areas of the countries where government fails to provide safe access to hydric sources, the poorest social groups are the ones hit the most by lack to safe water access.<sup>18</sup> Unequal access to water can be driven by different factors, from gender to religious to minorities discrimination, but all are framed within context in which unequal access to water creates a vicious circle further depending poverty, water right breaches<sup>19</sup> and therefore rising the risk for social instability that can escalate to national level.<sup>20</sup>

A second term, Water Cooperation (or Water Development), is often used as a synonym of Water Diplomacy, but it is rather linked to fields of “low” politics in which actors belong to separate institutional and hierarchic level rather than the diplomatic field. The term “cooperation” is normally used by Development agencies working for a broader set of societal issues, like poverty, gender equality and the environment, which however have also different methodologies.<sup>21</sup> One of the main critique made to the development agenda refers to its de-politicized and technocratic approach in resolving water allocation, as it misses to tackle the structural issues beneath the societal distress.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the lack of equal distribution of water among bordering national areas, social strata and regions is already causing major turmoil that can be hardly managed by single nation states as its causes doesn’t lie only on the mismanagement of the resources available by a single nation state but more to a systemic and overarching structure of reckless consumption, power imbalances and inequality encompassing both national and international actors.

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<sup>17</sup> UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), “The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind”.

<sup>18</sup> CNA, “The Role Of Water Stress In Instability And Conflict”, 21–22.

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), “The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind”.

<sup>20</sup> Swain Ashok and Joakim Öjendal, “Environmental conflict and peacebuilding” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, 3–5.

<sup>21</sup> Molnar et al., “Preventing Conflicts, Fostering Cooperation - The many Roles of Water Diplomacy”.

<sup>22</sup> Maria Vink, “The role of water diplomacy in peacebuilding” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, 287.

For these reasons, this paper will draw on the “critical hydropolitics”<sup>23</sup> literature that criticize a mere technical approach to Water Diplomacy (both in diplomatic and development sense) that on side focus only to reduce risks of interstate conflicts rather than intrastate, or subnational violence and from the other the attention is given merely to engineering practices that avoid the relevant natural, societal and political context.<sup>24</sup>

So the question to be answered is: how the concept of Water Diplomacy should be revised in order to better respond to the structural causes of water-related conflict? What is the role of the European Union is facing the new challenges coming from unequal distribution of water?

I will firstly present the concept of Peacebuilding and Multi-Track Diplomacy arguing that the same framework can be applied to Water Diplomacy in order to envisage a more accurate analysis of water-related conflicts. Secondly, I will focus on the European concept of Water Diplomacy that suggest that the Union is aware of the importance to include social inequality and political factors within the complex equation that water strife represents.

Finally, this broad concept will be applied to a concrete case study where structured social, political and geographical inequalities determine a critical lack of water that is leading to humanitarian crisis. Gaza’s case is interesting also for the Union’s decision to address this imbalance by funding a desalinization plant in Gaza, that might be understood as implementation of wider concept of Water Diplomacy.

## 2 Theoretical Framework: Peacebuilding and Multi Track Diplomacy

Peacebuilding per se is rather a recent field of study. The analysis of theories and practices necessary to create “the conditions for a self- sustaining peace” was adopted by the international community since the 1990’s.<sup>25</sup> The end of the Cold War, therefore of ideological confrontation between hegemons, followed by the blast of several ethnical conflicts spurred the research on the U.N. activity as peace guarantor.

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<sup>23</sup> Grech-Madin et al., “Negotiating water across levels: A peace and conflict “Toolbox” for water diplomacy”: 101.

<sup>24</sup> Maria Vink, “The role of water diplomacy in peacebuilding” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, 287.

<sup>25</sup> Teresa Almeida Cravo, “Peacebuilding: Assumptions, Practices and Critiques,” *JANUS.NET e-journal of International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2017): 4, <http://hdl.handle.net/11144/3032>.

The term peacebuilding however, was firstly coined by the “father of Peace and Conflict Studies” Johan Galtung in 1976.<sup>26</sup> Since the end of the II World War, Galtung tried to define “peace” and to understand which practices ensuring it.

From his research, he firstly criticized the standard definition of peace as absence of violence, for violence intended the as “deliberate act by an identifiable actor to incapacitate another”.<sup>27</sup> He proposed a more comprehensive definition where violence is perpetuated whenever the object of violence suffer of some limitation or negative influence that keeps “their somatic and mental realization below their potential”.<sup>28</sup> From this distinction, violence can be divided into three subcategories: Direct Violence, or the intentional act of aggression, Structural Violence, considered as the latent violence derived from structure of power and discrimination from which repression and exploitation take place, and Cultural Violence, or the system of norms and values that legitimize bot Structural and Direct violence.<sup>29</sup>

In order to address all these three forms of violence, standard peacekeeping and peacemaking strategies are ineffective. The first one aims uniquely to keep distances from the antagonists, but merely preventing direct violence could not by itself assure a long-lasting peace, only a truce of direct violence. Peacemaking from other side try to address the causes of the antagonism, but it focuses on preserving status quo of the conflicting parties, rather than address the structural imbalances causing the antagonism. For this reason, in order to fully resolve conflicts Peacebuilding strategies are required. Designed for the “eradication of the root causes of violence [...] that involves political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions and security practices, which are understood as complementary and mutually reinforcing [...]”<sup>30</sup> Peacebuilding tackle all causes of violence focusing on principles such as “equity” and “entropy”.<sup>31</sup>

These three concepts and the opening toward a more inclusive peace process design was officially institutionalized in 1992 with the adoption by the UN of “An Agenda for Peace” written by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The adoption of the “multidimensional peacekeeping” concept led to the increase of peace implementation tasks such as civil affairs and electoral monitoring, human right protection and humanitarian assistance.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 6. Equity needs to be considered if peacebuilding wants to eliminate structural exploitation and domination, while entropy refers to the necessity of including all society into the peace process and not only governmental or business elites.

<sup>32</sup> Charles T. Call, “The Evolution of Peacebuilding: Improved Ideas and Institutions?,” *United Nation University Centre of Policy Research* (2015): 2.



Parallel to the broadening concept of Peacebuilding, also the concept of Diplomacy underwent through a profound revision, dividing it into three main Tracks. In Track one Diplomacy – or Conflict Management School<sup>33</sup> – the effort of settling the disputes take place at state-to-state level. Actors normally dispose of military and economic puissance making them convincing negotiators between the antagonist parties. Track one, however, focus uniquely on short term management of the conflict, without addressing deeper and structural causes.<sup>34</sup> Track two of Diplomacy or Conflict Resolution School, at the contrary aim to the resolution of the deeper causes of conflict by involving communities and organized civil society.<sup>35</sup> However, even if this Track is able to empower the most marginalized section of society reaching solutions from below, it still cannot count on the political leverage of Track one.<sup>36</sup> When these two Tracks are coherently implemented at the same time, we can speak of Track three of Multi-Track Diplomacy.

The complexity of post-Cold War conflicts led to the broadening of the scope and issues tackled by the peace processes as “this inclusive approaches, engaging many actors from different parts of the system simultaneously, are needed to build sustainable peace”.<sup>37</sup>

Adding the theoretical foundation of Peacebuilding to the practical implementation of Multi-Track Diplomacy we reach an overall framework of analysis adapt to the intricate context of Water Diplomacy, in which an equal distribution of hydric resource is recognized as crucial as the cooperation between nation states. Indeed, “water interconnections stretch over geographical scales and political levels, and are often intertwined with culture and identity[.]”,<sup>38</sup> therefore water-related conflict need to be addressed both a national and sub-national level.

As already presented, the unequal distribution of water, due to mismanagement or lack of facilities, discrimination or hydro hegemonic power imbalances, is already causing worrisome hostilities or fueling past rancor among ethnic groups or social strata. Water Diplomacy, therefore, cannot be considered uniquely linked to state-to-state practices anymore. The areas of development and security have to be combined to ensure an equal distribution and management of

<sup>33</sup> Thania Paffenholz, “Understanding Peacebuilding Theory: Management, Resolution and Transformation,” *New Routes* 14, no. 2 (2009); published by the life & peace institute.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Mapendere, “Track One and a Half Diplomacy and the Complementarity of Tracks,” *COPOJ – Culture of Peace Online Journal* 2, no. 1 (2000): 67, [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/TrackOneandaHalfDiplomacy\\_Mapendere.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/TrackOneandaHalfDiplomacy_Mapendere.pdf). See also: Paffenholz, “understanding peacebuilding theory: Management, resolution and transformation”; Maria Vink, “The role of water diplomacy in peacebuilding” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*.

<sup>35</sup> Paffenholz, “understanding peacebuilding theory: Management, resolution and transformation”: 4.

<sup>36</sup> Mapendere, “Track One and a Half Diplomacy and the Complementarity of Tracks”: 68.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Vink, “The role of water diplomacy in peacebuilding” in *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*, 283.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

such vital resource.<sup>39</sup> From this, the importance of an overreaching concept of Water Diplomacy itself, as only by implementing an inclusive approach to water resolutions, the parties involved can design and implement an effective strategy.

Third Parties, such as NGOs or other international institutions, play a key role in defining both the concept and the implementation strategy of Water Diplomacy.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, by setting the agenda, arranging meetings, guiding discussion and facilitate the development of legal, technical and financial instruments, third actors can bridge the humanitarian, grass root level of Diplomacy with the foreign policy, state led one.<sup>41</sup> The agency of the European Union is strictly link to its capacity in envisioning and implementing a concept of Water Diplomacy that combines technical, political but also humanitarian aspects. The next section will focus precisely on the Council of the European Union's Conclusions on the topic, that actually reveals a step forward in the direction advocated by this paper.

### **3 The European Union Framework: a broader concept of Water Diplomacy**

July 2013. The Foreign Ministers of the European Union reunited in Brussels, recognized water as a "security challenge".<sup>42</sup> As we can read on the Council's Conclusions, the worldwide increase of conflicts and disputes over shared or limited water access represents a threat to international stability and peace, with possible direct consequences over the Union. In this sense, the November 2018 Council's Conclusion on Water Diplomacy are more direct, explicitly defining "migration flows" as one of these consequences.

Comparing the two documents, it's clear how the level of alert has arisen during these five years. From being defined as "security challenge" of July 2013, in November 2018 water is acknowledged as a "key global challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century". From the previous "substantial commitment" of the Union, in 2018 the Council advocated for "high level political engagement". Thus, the Union fully acknowledge the dangers coming from the overconsumption of hydric resources exacerbated by both climate change and human animosity. But how well the European Framework on Water Diplomacy recognizes the inner and structural causes of water-related conflict?

First of all, really few Institutions and Governments links the security challenge with humanitarian and development issue. Indeed, looking at the list of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 288,290.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Council of the European Union, "Council Conclusions on EU Water Diplomacy," (22 July 2013), 1.

definition used to define Water Diplomacy provided by the Stockholm International Water Institute and coming from different research centers, governmental institutions and NGO's,<sup>43</sup> fewer of these presents a broad definition that explicitly refers to the "needs of people" and "equity" beside security and international disputes: only 2 out of 3344. Meanwhile, in the section presenting the concept of Water Cooperation, word related to poverty, development and sustainability are much more used, but also in this case the main accent is given to the "commitment of countries to jointly manage their shared water resources".<sup>45</sup> The missing reference to subnational and societal sources of conflict and instability over the allocation of water, like poverty, ethnic tensions, unbalanced political leverage, within the standard concept Water Diplomacy indicate a clear gap in the possible concrete actions that States and International Organizations can take to address the problem.

Between the few institutions that use a broader concept of Water Diplomacy, that includes also issues related to development and social justice<sup>46</sup> there is the European Union thanks to the already mentioned document adopted by the November 2018 Council meeting.

The Council's Conclusions start with: "Water is prerequisite for human survival and dignity and a fundamental basis for the resilience of both societies and the environment".<sup>47</sup> It's worth noting that "survival" is not taken alone, but also "dignity" is an element of the resilience of society and environment. On the same document, the European Union, and therefore its Member States, recognize that safe drinking water and sanitation are "component of the right to an adequate standard of living",<sup>48</sup> while it stressed the interlinkage between water and security, human rights gender equality, climate change etc.

But a complete definition of the concept of Water Diplomacy used by the EU is fully described in point 5 that says:

<sup>43</sup> Molnar et al., "Preventing Conflicts, Fostering Cooperation - The many Roles of Water Diplomacy", 33–39.

<sup>44</sup> More in specific, the OCSE's definition that present Water Diplomacy as "negotiating solutions which balance the sometimes conflicting needs of people in different countries and sectors"; and Mlopoulos et al. that refers to the aim of Water Diplomacy as "Strengthening international co-operation for environmental protection under the framework of good neighboring and management of common goods...its main principles are: effectiveness, efficiency, equality, equivalence and equity." *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Diana Philip, "Water Cooperation Quotient", [https://www.strategicforesight.com/publication\\_pdf/28799WCQ-web.pdf](https://www.strategicforesight.com/publication_pdf/28799WCQ-web.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Molnar et al., "Preventing Conflicts, Fostering Cooperation - The many Roles of Water Diplomacy", 29–37 Between the 33 enlisted definitions of Water Diplomacy only 2 refer to themes like "needs of people" or "equity".

<sup>47</sup> General Secretariat of the Council Delegations, "Water Diplomacy - Council Conclusions: 19 November 2018," 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

EU water diplomacy must aim at facilitating the prevention, containment and resolution of conflicts, contributing to the *equitable, sustainable and integrated management of water resources from source to sea, and promoting resilience to climate change impacts on water*.<sup>49</sup>

On the 2013 Council's Conclusion on "EU Water Diplomacy" the terms "equitable" and "sustainable" are already there, but in 2013 the focus was mostly on Transboundary negotiations since water streams "do not necessarily follow states borders".<sup>50</sup> Instead, in 2018 Water Diplomacy seems to be upgraded toward "integrated water policies and actions address the full range of challenges – political and security, developmental, humanitarian and environmental."<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, the 2018 Council's Conclusions stress the connection between water-related conflicts and poverty, gender equality, health, food security, by adopting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and precisely Goal 6 on the improvement of sanitation and drinking water.

By acknowledging this connection, the Union seems to be aware that in order to produce efficient and coherent policies is fundamental to consider the synergies between all these agendas.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4 Case Study and Methodology: Gaza and the Multi-Track Water Diplomacy Framework**

Once presented the inclusion of the unequal access to water concern inside the European Union Water Diplomacy Framework, in this section will be presented the Gaza's water-led humanitarian crisis, as case study that provides useful data on how water inequality can create deep instability, and what drove the Union's Water Diplomacy actions in this contest.

The case study will be analysed through the Multi Track Water Diplomacy Framework that provide an analytical tool presenting the key factor affecting Transboundary Water Cooperation.<sup>53</sup> The Multi-Track Framework was developed to diagnose and solve disputes over water by encompassing all social, political, economic and geographical factors that might influence the efficacy of cooperation. This approach was chosen for its consistency with Peacebuilding Theory as it takes in consideration both political, structural and humanitarian root

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3. My italics.

<sup>50</sup> Council of the European Union, "Council conclusions on EU Water Diplomacy".

<sup>51</sup> General Secretariat of the Council Delegations, "Water Diplomacy - Council Conclusions", 8 - point n° 22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>53</sup> The Hague Institute for Global Justice, "The Multi-track Water Diplomacy Framework", 5. This approach was firstly presented on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 during the second Plenary Security Conference hosted by The Hague Institute of Global Justice.

of water driven conflicts. Through a Multi-Track perspective is possible to analyse the Gaza's case from subnational perspective that encompasses different institutional levels of governance, in order to unravel the complexity of relations between Israel, Palestine Authority and the Hamas led government currently ruling Gaza Strip.

The evaluation will be carried on through a limited part of the tables of elements recommended by the Approach. The choice between them is carried by considering their relevance with the topic, indeed each factor used is intended to highlight underpinning causes of water inequality and the outcomes in terms of turmoil and humanitarian risk. Most notably the analysis will consider Context (environmental, political and socio-economic factors as well status of the conflict), Formal Institutions (key legislation and stakeholder's engagement), Actors & Agency (actor's influence and leadership), Output (result of the policy decision at the end of the negotiation process).<sup>54</sup>

I will focus on the Union's reasons behind this outcome and the possible implications that this decision can add to the main argument on inequality as major factor to consider within water diplomacy negotiations.

The Gaza case is particularly relevant to this analysis for three main reasons:

1. The unequal access to water between Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank, Easter Jerusalem and Gaza Strip) can be considered Structured Violence.<sup>55</sup> Meaning, the repartition of water between Palestinian Authority and Israel is both historically unequal and highly complicated to rebalance. As the Context & Institutions section will explain, any Transboundary Water Management agreement has proven ineffective or misused by Israel in claiming the almost complete control over the water resources of the region.<sup>56</sup>
2. Even if the unbalanced repartition of water has been an issue since 1967 after the Six-Days-War, since 2010 the situation worsened significantly, leading to a critical humanitarian crisis with possible repercussion behind the Gaza's wall.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> General Secretariat of the Council Delegations, "Water Diplomacy - Council Conclusions", 27–37. Context factors refer to biophysical and socio-political characteristics that influence the negotiations. For Formal Institutions is intended the set of codified norms and rules adopted through a process of institutionalization. Actors and their Agency factors take in account the key stakeholders, their interest and their influence over the negotiation process. Output are the results of the co-operation, in this Case Study the Desalinization Project. Will not be taken in account Outcome and Implications since the decision considered is too recent for a valuable assessment.

<sup>55</sup> Almeida Cravo, "Peacebuilding". Reference is made to Gultan's three concept of Violence described in the Theoretical section.

<sup>56</sup> Mohammed T. Obidallah, "Water and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *CEJISS* 2, no. 2 (2010), <http://www.cejiss.org/issue-detail/water-and-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict>.

<sup>57</sup> Shira Efron et al., "The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis: Analysis and Policy Options," (RAND Centre for Middle East Public Policy (CMEPP), 2018).

3. The Union has just renewed its commitment to Palestine-Israel Peace Process, lately languishing behind the unilateral disrespect of the two-states solution by Israel. The Union, has stepped in by providing new essential funding, that might indicate a serious consideration of water inequality as major destabilization factor.

#### 4.1 Context & Institutions – Structured Inequality

The first factor affecting Water Diplomacy negotiations is the biophysical, political and social contest of the conflict. Indeed, the relation between natural condition of water scarcity together with socio-economic poor indicators can cause a huge pressure on already weak natural resources. If we add a political instable scenario, where different stakeholders are prone to conflict rather than cooperation and use water resource as tool of warfare then there will be all the circumstances for an environmental collapse. This is indeed the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where water had always had a crucial role, and where the current humanitarian crisis is linked to the unequal access to water.<sup>58</sup>

Gaza is a strip of land stretching for 40 km in front of the Mediterranean Sea, in the southern coastline of Israel bordering with Egypt. These 365 km<sup>2</sup>, belonging to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, are dwelled by the descendent of displaced Palestinian fleeing their native cities after the 1948 proclamation of the State of Israel and the war that followed.<sup>59</sup>

Water has always had a pivotal role inside the conflict. Even if many authors affirms that the conflict didn't blast solely on hydrologic concern, the control over water resources had always been an element of the strategic interests of the States involved, mainly on the creation and development of Israeli State.<sup>60</sup> The linkage between land occupation and control of water streams add an important element to the present situation.<sup>61</sup>

Since its creation in 1948, the appropriation and expropriation of water was fundamental for supplying new agricultural settlements, causing since the beginning an unsustainable drilling of groundwater resources. The 1964 National Water Carrier Plan, meant to divert the upper Jordan River, was aimed to relieve and insure copious quantity of water necessary to the Israeli settlement in all Palestine. However, this ambitious plan was contrasted by the riparian neighboring

<sup>58</sup> Obidallah, "Water and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict": 74.

<sup>59</sup> Husam Baalousha, "Water Scarcity and Environmental Problem in the Gaza Strip, Palestine: Origin, Impacts and Prospects for Solutions," in *Water Shortages : Environmental, Economic & Social Impacts*, Chapter 3, ed. Andrew C. Briggs (New York, United States: Nova Science Publishers Inc, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> Mark Zeitoun, *Power and Water in the Middle East: The Hidden Politics of the Palestinian-Israeli Water Conflict* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2008), 72.

<sup>61</sup> Sharif S. Elmusa, "The Land-Water Nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 3 (1996), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538260> (accessed May 23, 2019).

states (Jordan and Syria) that would have been affected by a serious decrease of the Jordan flow rate in their territories. The 1967 Six-Days-War blasted after several skirmish between Syrian army and the Israeli one, with the gunsight on the infrastructures conveying the stream of the river.<sup>62</sup>

The repercussion of the 1967 war on the hydro-political situation of the region are at the basis of the current unbalanced allocation of water. Indeed, together with the large areas occupied by the Israeli Army, also granted the almost total control of both superficial and underground hydrological sources. Politically this meant the fading of Israeli concern on the potential threat of water, but at the same time, it implicated the growing deterrent power over the other riparian states.<sup>63</sup>

Even if the 1995 Oslo II Agreement, quite unexpectedly, affirmed the rights to water also to Palestinian and Gaza dwellers, water control remained under the firm grip of Israel.<sup>64</sup> Even more interesting for the topic of this paper, the several Committees on Water gathered during the negotiation process only focused on the technical aspects of the allocation of water, giving to Palestinian Authority the local management inside the Occupied Territories, without addressing the overall unbalanced shared of domination over hydrological sources. Indeed, art. 40 of Oslo Interim Accords (meant to be renewed in five years but still with no conclusions after 25 years) set up the Joint Water Committee with the goal to institutionalize cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on water management and allocation. However, the Committee become the symbol of the uneven relations of power between the two parts, “giving to Israel veto power of Palestinian water but no corresponding powers to Palestinians over Israeli water management”.<sup>65</sup>

This dominant position is almost total in Gaza case, where high population growth, restriction of goods, overexploitation and pollution of the existing resources caused a persisting water crisis, that in the last decades is producing a considerable humanitarian deadlock.<sup>66</sup>

Since 1948 mass displacement of Palestinian refugees, in Gaza the population has grown with an average rate of 3%, making of the area one of the most densely populated of the world.<sup>67</sup> The high pressure on the natural resources coming from

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<sup>62</sup> Zeitoun, *Power and Water in the Middle East*, 70.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.. See also: Centre for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), *The Rights to Water in Palestine: A Background* (Brooklyn, NY, 2003); Fact Sheet 1, <http://www.cesr.org/sites/default/files/Palestine.RighttoWater.Factsheet.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup> Elmusa, “The Land-Water Nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”.

<sup>65</sup> World Bank, “Toward Water Security for Palestinians: West Bank and Gaza Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Poverty Diagnostic,” (2018); WASH Poverty Diagnostic, 101. See also Zeitoun, *Power and Water in the Middle East*, Chapt. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Efron et al., “The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis”, iii.

<sup>67</sup> World Population Review, “Gaza Population 2019,” <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/gaza-population/> (accessed May 25, 2019).

the overpopulation of the area, is worsened by the 12 years of Israeli blockade, active since 2007. Beside restricting the possibility economic growth and living,<sup>68</sup> the restriction of dual-use items hit essential tools for the WASH sector (pumps, drilling equipment and chemical products used for depurate water).<sup>69</sup>

The only resource of water of Gaza is the Costal Aquifer.<sup>70</sup> Hence, groundwater is the only natural source of water in Gaza, but after decades of its overexploitation and pollution only 4% of the 180 m<sup>3</sup> extracted yearly meets drinking water standards.<sup>71</sup> The over extraction lead to saline infiltrations and other contamination (chloride and nitrate), making the quality of water undrinkable and highly dangerous for the health of the most vulnerable, starting from children.<sup>72</sup> In total, the amount of daily pre-capita availability of water is under the WHO recommended threshold of 100 lcd.<sup>73</sup>

In 2014 less than 11% of Gaza's population had access to safe drinking water through public network, but the situation deteriorated even more in the last years. The ongoing conflict with Israel keeps damaging water infrastructures, while the restriction on the importable goods in Gaza hinder any possibility for reconstruction.<sup>74</sup> At the same time the intra-Palestinian fight between the de facto Hamas government of Gaza and Palestinian Authority leader, brought in 2017 to a critical electricity shortage, essential for the functioning of desalinization plants and wastewater facilities.<sup>75</sup>

The situation has reached unbearable levels, with an estimated 26% of all reported disease in Gaza linked to poor quality and quantity of water. However, such high risks of epidemics spread, bear relevant implications also outside Gaza's borders, as the next section will report.

68 Oxfam International, "Timeline: The Humanitarian Impact of the Gaza Blockade," <https://oxf.am/2FMxQT4>. For example Israel is limiting the fishing areas where Palestinian are allowed to fish to 6 Nautical Miles from the cost, while most of the fish can be found at least after nine NM. At the same time, all areas in a 300 km range from the fence enclosing Gaza strip are interdicted, while the 35% of Palestinian farms are located exactly within the Access Restricted Area. Farming and fishing are the two most common economic activities in Gaza.

69 Shira Efron, Jordan R. Fischbach and Giulia Giordano, "Gaza's Water and Sanitation Crisis and Its Implications for Public Health," in *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis: Analysis and Policy Options*, ed. Rand Corporation; Adapted article, 87.

70 Husam Baalousha, "Water Scarcity and Environmental Problem in the Gaza Strip, Palestine: Origin, Impacts and Prospects for Solutions" in *Water Shortages : Environmental, Economic & Social Impacts*, 5. Indeed, Gaza lacks of surfacing water in the area, plus the Israeli dam that closed even the seasonal stream of the Wadi Gaza, prevents the natural flow of the river to reach the area.

71 World Bank, "Securing Water for Development in West Bank and Gaza," (2018), 3. The annual recharge of the Costal Aquifer, mostly through rainfall infiltration amount to 50 to 60 mcm annually while the amount of water actually extracted each year is three times more, around 160 mcm.

72 Efron et al., "The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis", 12.

73 World Bank, "Securing Water for Development in West Bank and Gaza", 3.

74 Shira Efron, Jordan R. Fischbach and Giulia Giordano in *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis*, 86.

75 Ibid., 87.



## 4.2 Actors & Agency - Dependency: a double edge weapon

The deeply rooted hegemonic position of Israel as main controller of water in the region stand as bedrock to the unequal access to water that Palestinian can enjoy. Indeed, Israel control the 100% of Jordan River Basin and the 80% of the ground-water mountain aquifer, while it consumes from 85% to 87% of the resources available in West Bank.<sup>76</sup>

In Gaza the level of dependency on Israel is almost total. Given that the main economic activities in are highly water dependent and the 70% of the Coastal Aquifer is unusable due to saline infiltrations, Gaza is left with two main options for meeting the increasing demand of water: desalinization or water purchase.<sup>77</sup>

The small scale desalinization facilities are currently hindered by systemic energy shortage that leave Gaza with only four hour of electricity per day.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, material for building/strengthening the present desalination plants needs to be imported from outside the Gaza walls, controlled by Israel.

Meanwhile, the purchasing option increase at each MCM bought the Palestinian Authority debt to Israel State owned water company Mekorot.<sup>79</sup> In addition to the required funds, the purchasing option will increase the amount of arrears that Palestine Authority already due to Mekorot. In 2017 the total debt amounted to US\$335 million, and it's expected to double due to the new agreement.<sup>80</sup>

Even if Gaza Hamas led Government rely on external donations and humanitarian led to cover water provisions, the division of power between the actors involved and their agency are clear. Israel is the only actor controlling both land and water resources, while what can be considered as a first attempt of Trans-boundary Water Negotiation (the Oslo Interim Accord) is outdated and never fully implemented. Moreover, Israel is pursuing an incredibly effective discursive strategy that support its hydro-hegemony on the area. Presenting itself as “planner” of the backward and poor Palestinian water management system enhance the idea of good will and cooperative attitude while the Palestinian real water interests are completely disregarded. The accent is put on the “need” of cooperation over water rather than the “right” of equal allocation, hiding from the public discourse the disrespected disposition of Oslo Interim Accord.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Centre for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), *The Rights to Water in Palestine: a Background*.

<sup>77</sup> World Bank, “Toward Water Security for Palestinians”, 88–89.

<sup>78</sup> Shira Efron, Jordan R. Fischbach and Giulia Giordano in *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis*, 86–87. In this case, the lack of electricity is due to the intra-Palestinian rivalry between Hamas Gaza government and the Palestinian Authority.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 87. In July 2017 the Palestine Authority and Israel negotiated an implementation of the water provision to Gaza of 10 MCM, that however needs to be delivered through a new pipeline that therefore requires extra donations.

<sup>80</sup> World Bank, “Securing Water for Development in West Bank and Gaza”, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Zeitoun, *Power and Water in the Middle East*, Chap. 7.

The structured inequality between the two main actors is directly related to the permanent water crisis in Gaza, as well the escalation of the humanitarian emergency, that will soon represent a direct threat to the whole region if not constrained.

The last report of the RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy together with Israel's State Comptroller launched the alarm of possible health risk in Israel and Egypt.<sup>82</sup> launched the alarm of possible health risk in Israel and Egypt. Indeed, potential water diseases can spread to the neighboring countries through the 108,000 cubic meters of untreated sewage reaching the sea every day.<sup>83</sup> This potential threat is already starting to become reality: in 2016 a desalinization plant providing 15% of water supply to Israel has been shut down due to pollution coming from Gaza; in 2017 the Israeli Minister of Health prescribed to land-owner with territories nearby Gaza to stop using water for the usual reservoir due to contamination with Gaza's sewage.<sup>84</sup>

The report provided also a case scenario of cholera epidemics: if such water-related disease starts from Gaza, not only would have a terrific human cost due to the lack of health facilities, but also would be difficult to contain in the area.<sup>85</sup>

The full dependency of Gaza comes with high cost for Israel. As the Gaza case perfectly shows, if water doesn't respect borders, neither does poverty (and its consequences).

The unequal allocation of water resources is both the outcome and cause of further instability within an already highly unpredictable context. In this case, the Oslo accord that focused only on technical aspects only reinforced the dominant/submitted power relations between the two main actors. Political power in this case is extremely intertwined with water control, to a certain point that is difficult to distinguish the two component within the history and the present of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What is certain is that political power led to control over water, and that the uneven allocation if not rebalanced will have high repercussion on both the "elephant and the fly" of this story.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Tareq Baconi, "Beyond Humanitarian Quick-Fixes for Gaza: Commentary," *European Council on Foreign Relations - ecfr* (14 March 2018), [https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_beyond\\_humanitarian\\_quick\\_fixes\\_for\\_gaza](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_beyond_humanitarian_quick_fixes_for_gaza). See also Shira Efron, Jordan R. Fischbach and Giulia Giordano in *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis*, 90.

<sup>83</sup> Shira Efron, Jordan R. Fischbach and Giulia Giordano in *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis*, 90.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 41–46.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Zeitoun, *Power and Water in the Middle East*, 70.

### 4.3 Output: Gaza Central Desalinization Plant as tool to overcome water inequality

The European Union decision to build a Central Water Desalinization Plant in Gaza, comes after both humanitarian considerations and external interest of the Union. Each of them can be seen as an indicator of the Union's broader concept of Water Diplomacy

The findings will be limited by two main factors: time and data. Indeed, the decision to undertake the widest rehabilitation ever of water supply infrastructures in Gaza was taken not even one year and half ago, the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Even if some of the components of the plan have been already ultimate, most notably the solar energy field, the few time passed doesn't allow a consistent assessment on the actual improvements on water supply. Moreover, the limited data available constrains the range of sources only to European ones, mostly coming from the European Action Service, and very few academic or impartial report on the argument.

However, a wider analysis on the Union's main interest on the region, as well similar desalinization commitment in other strategic areas, can be interpreted as the implementation of a more comprehensive Water Diplomacy.

On March 2018 a co-chaired conference hosted in Brussels by the EU and the Palestinian Authority marked "the start of the biggest ever infrastructure project in Gaza Strip".<sup>87</sup> The conference successfully pledged for international donations to fund the €562.3 million worth investment project that will provide with at least €55 million m<sup>3</sup>/per year of drinkable water to Gaza habitants. The Union alone (including 20 Member States) provided €77.1 million, but the project will be carried out with the support of 16 countries and international organization.

Even if several desalinization projects have been completed thanks to European funds (last one in 2013 in collaboration with UNICEF) the range of this projects goes beyond the previous ones.<sup>88</sup> Other than the Central Desalinization Plant the project entails also an Energy Supply Power Plant, a North-South Carrier Distributor and a Strategic Plan to reduce water losses and increase revenues.<sup>89</sup> The project is indeed aimed to reconstruct the whole water supply system

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<sup>87</sup> European Commission, "Hope for Gaza: EU Creates Broad International Coalition to Provide Drinking Water to 2 Million People in Gaza: Press Release," [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-2081\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-2081_en.htm).

<sup>88</sup> UNICEF State of Palestine, "EU and UNICEF Lay First Stone of €10 Million Seawater Desalination Plant in Gaza: Press Release," <https://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/eu-and-unicef-lay-first-stone-10-million-seawater-desalination-plant-gaza>.

<sup>89</sup> European Commission, "GIVING GAZA HOPE: GAZA CENTRAL DESALINATION PLANT PROGRAMME PROVIDING WATER to 2 MILLION PEOPLE,"; Fact Sheet, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news\\_corner/news/giving-gaza-hope-eu-and-partners-take-stock-biggest-ever-water-programme-gaza\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/giving-gaza-hope-eu-and-partners-take-stock-biggest-ever-water-programme-gaza_en).

of Gaza with the explicit purpose to “tackling water scarcity as a driver of conflict” and “ensuring the viability of two-State solution”.<sup>90</sup>

These are the stated reasons behind the huge commitment showed by the Union, officially represented by Commissioner for Neighbor Policy and Enlargement Johannes Hahn, who in the opening speech to the conference affirmed: “This Project is about more than just water. Is about making a difference not only for the population in Gaza but also for the realization of peace and stability the region”.<sup>91</sup>

The Desalinization Central Plant is seen as a step forward for both resolving Gaza’s water crisis and boost its economy. Indeed, by enabling Gaza’s infrastructures to reach fully efficiency, the goal is to thrive private sector growth, essential for both stabilize the humanitarian situation and to support more consistently the Two-States solution, highly disregarded by Israel that continued to pursue settlement strategies on Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>92</sup>

Since only part of the project has been implemented so far, we cannot be sure of the concrete impact on the global situation. However, what is fundamental to notice is the main Normative approach used by the Union in responding to the unfair repartition of water.<sup>93</sup> What the Union’s strategic move suggest is that both the clear disrespect of human rights to water and the consequent higher risk of instability in between Gaza - Palestinian Authority and Israel is not in both the Union and the regional interests. Israel might be willing to accept the construction of the Desalinization Plant due to the high risk of contamination but the Union’s move reflects its specific foreign policy interests as well the role of Normative Power discursively entangles inside its foreign policy directed to this region.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> European Commission Audiovisual Service, *Donors' Conference for the Gaza Central Desalination Plant: Opening Statement by Johannes Hahn, Member of the EC* (Brussels - EC/Berlaymont, 2018), <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-152788>.

<sup>92</sup> Sami Abdel-Shafi, “Realigning EU Policy in Palestine Towards a Viable State Economy and Restored Dignity,” (October 2015); Research Paper - Middle East and North Africa Program, 24.

<sup>93</sup> Persson Anders, “Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe Can Work in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict,” *Journal of Common Market Studies - JCMS* 55, no. 6 (2017): 1415–7. Normative Power Europe is a concept firstly proposed by Ian Manners, describing the development by the EU of certain set of values and the attempt to implement them in foreign policy field. Normative power refers to the ability of the Union to diffuse norms and set what is seen as normal in world politics. See Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” *Journal of Common Market Studies - JCMS* 40, no. 2 (2002).

<sup>94</sup> Persson Anders, “Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe can Work in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict”: 1419 . Persson suggests that even if the Union seems unable to instill its core values on other actor’s action, its agency is still visible in determining what can be considered normal, by shaping the discourse over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Three cases are provided by the same author supporting this evidence.

These considerations seem to suggest a certain awareness by the Union side that Gaza's water crisis in specific, but also the cycle of violence regularly striking the area cannot be resolved without tacking in account the major role played by water.

Other cases of European funded desalinization Plant in strategic areas of the world, in which the Union had the pressing interest in maintaining stability and peace, seems to support these findings.<sup>95</sup>

The EU's commitment toward an equitable repartition of water as crucial factor producing stability in the region seems to support the main argument of a broad concept of Water Diplomacy Framework implemented by the Union.<sup>96</sup>

## 5 Conclusions

This paper wanted to bring a small contribution on the critical literature on Water Diplomacy, by presenting the need to take in consideration unequal access to water as one of the main factors raising the risk of social unrest and regional destabilization in many part of this world.

By analyzing the Union's framework on Water Diplomacy we can conclude that the Union's policy in this field is driven by a wider perspective that push the horizons of Water Diplomacy beyond the restricted area of conflict between Nation States. Indeed, it is visible an aware commitment to ensuring human right to water and to develop the interlinkage between water and other UN Development Goals that recognize the vicious circle between access to water, poverty and instability.

The Gaza case provided an example on how this vicious circle can have such destabilizing effects into an already troubled region. Moreover, the extremely complicated situation on the ground between Gaza and Hamas Government, Israel and Palestinian Authority (the only one recognized as legitimate by the Union) make almost impossible any comprehensive negotiation of an effective trans-boundary agreement. This move our attention to an inequality based approach of Water Diplomacy.

Indeed, the deadlock between the different actors is structured in historical and legal term by the Oslo Accord, and alleviating the humanitarian conditions through regular water diplomacy negotiation would be useless. However, the

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<sup>95</sup> European Commission, "EU Announces Major Support to Pioneering Renewable Energy and Water Plant in Djibouti,". Djibouti desalinization plant has been successfully completed on January 2008 with the intent to provide water to the capital Djibouti City, preventing social instability after the sever water shortage of the last decades.

<sup>96</sup> Obidallah, "Water and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict": 104.

pressure of the humanitarian crisis generated by the unbalanced allocation of water cannot be ignored for long as the repercussion can be catastrophic for all the region.

The instability in this sense is exactly due to the unequal access to water that can be resolved only through a rebalancing action. In this sense the provision of new water supply infrastructures to Gaza supported by the Union can be seen as driven by inequality consideration rather than ignoring the right of water as other actors have done in the past. European Union seems to recognize the fact that Gaza conflict cannot be resolved without water equality.<sup>97</sup>

Surprisingly enough, the term “Water Diplomacy” is not mentioned in any report on the construction of the Desalinization Plant, nor by any institutional actor representing the Union.<sup>98</sup> A possible explanation of this missed reference to what can be fully regarded as Water Diplomacy Strategy might come from the persistent association of the term with technical negotiation between two Nation States, that doesn’t include any other non-national actor. If this is the case, the Union still needs to link its framework with the implementing tools of this increasingly relevant foreign policy field.

The relevance of Water Diplomacy, however, goes beyond the aim to prevent conflict and instability in water scarce and political troubled areas. Water will be an increasingly rare resources on European soil too. In the southern part of Europe, water scarcity or extreme meteorological events are already a political issue.<sup>99</sup> More studying on the actual sources of water-related instability is needed for preparing the Union to the future implications of Climate Change.

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<sup>98</sup> The only reference on Gaza Desalinization Plant as Water Diplomacy action implemented by the Union is present on the European External Action Service min page on the topic. European External Action Service, “Water... A Tool of Peace,” <http://eueuropaeas.fpfis.slb.ec.europa.eu:8084/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/53798/water-t>. Neither in the description of the decision or the plan, nor in the word of Commissioner Hahn this decision is linked with Water Diplomacy Framework.

<sup>99</sup> Lola Hierro, “Spain Faces Threat of Water Crisis,” *Euroactive*, December 11, 2015.

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# **Inequality on Display?**

## **Politics of Re-Presentation in the Humboldt Forum**

*Annika Hack*

*The geopolitical and spatial distribution of inequities cast across our world today are not simply mimetic versions of earlier imperial incarnations but refashioned and sometimes opaque and oblique reworkings of them.<sup>1</sup>*

*Our age is the age of museums. If we are what we collect, it is in our museums that we see ourselves. There we also see ways in which we – as individuals, as cultures, as scholars – choose to represent ourselves, our objects, and those of others. Our objects speak, not with their own voice, but with the voices of those for whom we are privileged to speak.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress. Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2016), 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Roy MacLeod, "Postcolonialism and Museum Knowledge: Revisiting the Museums of the Pacific," *Pacific Science* 52, no. 4 (1998): 308.

*Museums do not simply issue objective descriptions or form logical assemblages; they generate representations and attribute value and meaning in line with certain perspectives or classificatory schemas which are historically specific. They do not so much reflect the world through objects as to use them to mobilize representations of the world past and present.*<sup>3</sup>

## 1 Introduction

Most recently, voices which advocate a decolonisation of twenty-first century society have gained more attention within the global cultural-policy sphere. In this context, activists' demands and efforts range from (amongst others) substituting street names that exalt colonial expansion with the names of freedom-fighters to the case of Ovaherero and Nama descendants filing a lawsuit against the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the genocide (1904-1908) which was committed during German colonisation in today's Namibia.<sup>4</sup> These efforts target colonial repercussions such as continued structural violence and discursive inequality and have thus also accelerated the debate on colonial objects in European museums.<sup>5</sup> In this context, a speech given by French President Emmanuel Macron in Burkina Faso in 2017 in which he stated that he "cannot accept that a large share of several African countries' cultural heritage be kept in France" has contributed to the revitalisation and the topicality of the highly charged discourse concerning the storage and exhibition as well as the restitution of collections which came to Europe under colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Henrietta Lidchi, "The Poetics and the Politics of Exhibiting of Other Cultures," in *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 160.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the dealing with postcolonial issues in Germany, see: Elise Pape, "Postcolonial Debates in Germany – An Overview," *African Sociological Review / Revue Africaine de Sociologie* 21, no. 2 (2017): 2-14, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/90018694](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/90018694) (last accessed 06 January 2020).

<sup>5</sup> For reasons of harmonisation and increased readability, this paper will use the term "colonial objects" in order to refer to objects which were taken by the colonial power from the colonised territory during imperialism. It is not necessarily assumed that these objects were exclusively made during colonialism, it simply means that these objects were transferred to the centers of the colonial powers during colonial rule.

<sup>6</sup> Macron, Emmanuel, "Emmanuel Macron's speech at the University of Ougadougou," <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/11/28/emmanuel-macrons-speech-at-the-university-of-ouagadougou.en> (last accessed 29 March 2019). Following his speech, President Macron commissioned a report on the restitution of African objects which gained international attention. The report is authored by the French art historian Bénédicte Savoy and Professor for Economics Felwine Sarr. Bénédicte Savoy, and Felwine Sarr, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Towards a New Relational Ethics* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture, 2018), [http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr\\_savoy\\_en.pdf](http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_en.pdf) (last accessed 06 January 2020).

Also, in Germany the tracing of colonial continuities has generated a prominent development sparking societal as well as activist outrage and spurring a political controversy in the country. What is referred to here is the final stage of the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace (*Stadtschloss*), the former *Hohenzollern* residence. It is to host the *Humboldt Forum (HF)* which is, by now, scheduled to open its doors towards the end of 2020. This superlative museum is designed to hold the ethnographic collections of Germany's capital city. The imminent opening of this high-scale endeavour has unearthed legal, political as well as moral questions about the legitimate ownership and display of objects that were expropriated during European colonial conquests.<sup>7</sup>

On the one hand, the *HF* has officially been recognised as a project devoted to the “cultural representation of the Federal Republic of Germany” and the ultimate goal of its construction has been formulated as aiming for nothing less than “[t]o be in touch with as much of the world as possible” – a statement which was made in 2011 by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (*Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz*), the institution holding the objects which are to be displayed in the “most important cultural project in Germany at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, decolonisation activists and civil society associations perceive this approach not only as another affirmation of Germany's “colonial amnesia” – proving that most of the time, the historical appraisal of Germany's colonial legacy has taken a backseat to the country's Nazi past – but also as most insensitive towards facing up with the country's colonial history by ignoring the entanglement of culture, heritage and identity.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in 2013, the alliance campaign *No Humboldt21!* issued a resolution in which the initiative requests a moratorium for the *HF*. This demand is justified by stating

<sup>7</sup> This paper will refer to these objects simply as “objects” and will thus refrain from further defining what kind of objects (art, religious etc.) these might represent. This is simply owed to the fact that there exists a multitude of purposes and meanings to the objects due to their use and ownership by different people over time.

<sup>8</sup> My own translation. In original: „Die kulturelle Repräsentation der Bundesrepublik in der Hauptstadt Berlin ist ebenfalls Aufgabe des Bundes. Beispiele sind das Humboldt Forum (...).“ Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, *Im Bund mit der Kultur. Kultur- und Medienpolitik der Bundesregierung* (Ostbevern: MKL Druck GmbH & Co. KG, 2018), 7, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/992814/735324/1f0c56735fecb2745648fbc4a0327e4e/im-bund-mit-der-kultur-26-08-2016-download-bkm-data.pdf?download=1,%20p.%207> (last accessed 06 January 2020). Hermann Parzinger, *The Humboldt Forum. “To be in touch with as much of the world as possible.” The Goal and Significance of Germany's Most Important Cultural Project at the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Berlin: Stiftung Berliner Schloss – Humboldtforum, 2011), 15, [https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload\\_SPK/documents/mediathek/humboldt-forum/rp/brochure\\_Humboldt\\_Forum\\_to-be-in-touch-with-as-much-of-the-world-as-possible.pdf](https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/fileadmin/user_upload_SPK/documents/mediathek/humboldt-forum/rp/brochure_Humboldt_Forum_to-be-in-touch-with-as-much-of-the-world-as-possible.pdf) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Berlin Postkolonial, <http://www.berlin-postkolonial.de> (last accessed 29 March 2019). Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland Bund e.V., <http://isdonline.de> (last accessed 29 March 2019). AfricaVenir, “Decolonial Objections Against the Humboldt-Forum,” <http://www.africavenir.org/projects/projects-germany/decolonial-objections-against-the-humboldt-forum.html> (last accessed 29 May 2019).

that “the current concept violates the dignity and property rights of communities in all parts of the world, it is Eurocentric and restorative. The establishment of the Humboldt Forum is a direct contradiction to the aim promoting equality in a migration society.”<sup>10</sup>

However, even prior to the construction plans of the *HF*, postcolonial critics had pilloried the institution of the ethnographic museum for neglecting to recognise that “[c]ollections are not extracted willingly from originating cultures, they are always excisions, removed, often painfully from the body of other less, powerful cultures.”<sup>11</sup> In this context, questions of re-presentation which spring from asymmetrical forms of power have arisen and are of concern not only in the realm of critical cultural studies but have come to play an important role in the political interactions of international relations. Thus, primarily left intellectuals and critics perceive museums as a reflection of how the “Western” world still sees “its” former colonies today: a testimony of a continued forceful oppression and the deprivation of voice and agency – as one of the myriad repercussions of colonial injustice. This has resulted in an inequality which is represented by (amongst others) both, a material inequality which is concerned with the problematic whereabouts of the expropriated objects and a discursive construction of inequality of whose perception of history has been disseminated in past and present. Hence, the conflict over control of cultural property as national patrimony can be regarded as a struggle about an “equality of representation”.<sup>12</sup>

In order to explore the way in which European museums respond to critical claims regarding the holding and exhibition of colonial objects, this paper pursues the following research question: How does the *HF* deal with the recently sparked debate about its colonial legacy? To be more precise, does the *HF* reinforce, respectively reproduce discursive inequality? Accordingly, the *HF* itself will function as a tangible and latest example of putting critical cultural theory into practice. However, as the museum itself has not opened its doors to date, this paper will analyse the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*.<sup>13</sup>

For the purpose of providing a socio-historical and socio-political context, the first part of this paper touches upon the most crucial aspects of the intertwined history of museums and colonialism. Following this, the theoretical foundation of this paper’s analytical part will be provided by covering the

<sup>10</sup> No Humboldt21!, “Stop the Planned Construction of the Humboldt-Forum in the Berlin Palace!” (2013), <http://www.no-humboldt21.de/resolution/english/> (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Lidchi, “Poetics,” 198.

<sup>12</sup> James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones,” in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. James Clifford (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 210.

<sup>13</sup> This project ran from September 2016 to December 2017 and was aimed at gathering new and experimental impulses used for planning future exhibitions of the *HF*. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, “Ethnologisches Museum. Humboldt Lab Tanzania,” <https://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/ethnologisches-museum/collection-research/research/humboldt-lab-tanzania/> (last accessed 29 May 2019).

movement of *critical museology* with a specific focus on the theory of museums as *contact zones*. As mentioned above, the analysis of this paper is based on the project *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*. Hence, methodologically, an investigation will be carried out by examining publications which are related to the conceptualisation of the *HF* and the evaluation of the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*. Therefore, it will be explored in which way this collaborative project can be regarded as a *contact zone* approach and if so, in how far this can possibly alter the dominant politics of re-presentation in European museums.

## 2 Context

It was especially in the 1970s that “[p]oints of view anchored in the colonies and ex-colonies entered the dialogue, challenging Eurocentric values and bringing into view the force of colonialism and empire in creating the modern world.”<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, while embedded in post-structuralist and postcolonial theory, it was during the 1990s that this claim for scrutinising a presumed European universalism also gained access to the discourse on museums, their missions and practices as well as on the relations to the source communities of the objects.<sup>15</sup> However, regardless of this apparent realisation of the museum’s post-colonial status, critical voices have condemned this institution as having been established for as well as serving an elite and therefore as “one of modernity’s key tools of separation and purification” because of its trait to exhibit “a representation, divorced from reality”.<sup>16</sup> This is closely linked to the assumption that “relations of power” exist within the museum “whereby one portion of humanity can select, value, and collect pure products of others”.<sup>17</sup>

### *Re-Presentation*

As this paper aims at investigating the *modus operandi* of contemporary European museums concerning their colonial legacy as well as their intricacy in colonial continuities, the focus of this paper lies on the discursive construction of

<sup>14</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travelwriting and Transculturation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Robin Boast, “Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited,” *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2011): 56, DOI: doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1379.2010.01107.x (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Ruth B. Phillips, “The Museum of Art-Thropology. Twenty-First Century Imbroglios,” *RES Anthropology and aesthetics* 52 (2007): 15, DOI: doi.org/10.1086/RESv52n1ms20167734 (last accessed 27 May 2019). Susan Ashley, “First Nations on View: Canadian Museums and Hybrid Representation of Culture” (paper presented at the annual graduate conference of the York/Ryerson Programme in Communication and Culture, York University, Canada, 18-20 March 2005), 31.

<sup>17</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 213.

inequality. Therefore, the dimension of inequality which will be traced, roots in “colonial power [which] was and continues to be exercised through (Western) knowledge (...).”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the question to be dealt with is that of the politics of re-presentation, of an institutionalised and systematic narrativisation of history within and through the medium of the museum which can be seen as a site where “[p]ower and representation remain inextricably linked”.<sup>19</sup> In principle, this paper refers to the expression re-presentation in the sense that the acclaimed cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall assessed as

(...) the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to *produce meaning*. Already, this definition carries the important premise that things – *objects, people, events in the world* – *do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is us – in society, within human cultures – who make things mean, who signify.*<sup>20</sup>

Hence, by elaborating on Hall’s assumption that meaning is always constructed and never “fixed, final or true”, this paper makes use of the term “re-presentation” in order to express the appropriation of “the right or authority to speak or act on behalf of” someone else, “a person, group, institution, etc.”; hence, to speak the voice of someone else, to claim the right to represent someone else and to ultimately deny them the right to speak for themselves.<sup>21</sup> This understanding is deeply intertwined with what the postcolonial literary and cultural critic Gayatri C. Spivak has introduced as “the staging of the world in representation – its scene of writing, its *Darstellung* – dissimulates the choice of and need for ‘heroes,’ paternal proxies, agents of power – *Vertretung*.”<sup>22</sup> This is exactly the crucial relation between representation in form of the binary struc-

<sup>18</sup> Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. New Orientations in the Study of Culture* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 133-134 (emphasis added).

<sup>19</sup> Gilane Tawadros, “Reading (and Curating) from Right to Left,” *Tate Papers* no. 12 (2009): 2, [www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/reading-and-curating-from-right-to-left](http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/reading-and-curating-from-right-to-left) (last accessed 29 January 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation,” in *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 1997), (= Culture, Media and Identities), 61 (emphasis added).

<sup>21</sup> OED Online, “representation n.1, 3a,” Oxford University Press, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/162997> (last accessed 03 January 2020). In order to denote this specific characteristic of the *attribution by others*, the term is (at times) written with a hyphen, whereas the hyphen stands for the denied self-presentation and highlights the labelling process inherent in external attribution. However, for reasons of better readability, this paper partly refrains from using the written form of “re-presentation” in the following. However, whenever the term “representation” is used, it is referred to this specific meaning, denoting attribution and appropriation.

<sup>22</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, Second Edition, ed. Bill Ashcroft, and Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), 31 (emphasis in original).



tures of subjecthood and objectification, of self-representation and representation by others which this paper aims at disclosing.

Because museums have been power plants of knowledge construction and knowledge dissemination ever since their institutionalisation, they have been ultimately, and “intimately engaged in the process of representation”.<sup>23</sup> This inextricably carries hegemonial structures of power interlaced with attribution, interpretation and appropriation which goes back to the acquainted history of museums and colonialism.

## 2.1 Museums and Colonialism

During the colonial period, new academic disciplines such as anthropology developed not least due to the fact that “[t]he material evidence of the newly discovered cultures was studied, catalogued, and displayed in European museums to illustrate the greatness of the colonial empire.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, European museums functioned as storehouses for objects derived from “non-European” regions and – in their original purpose – intended to “display national wealth and a triumphal message to audiences (...).”<sup>25</sup> What follows from this is that the seizure of objects and their exhibition were essential for proving that the imperial nation was capable of “gather[ing] and master[ing] beyond national boundaries.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the acquisition of objects as well as the public display thereof in museums enabled people from the Global North to “experience their own worlds as relatively and reassuringly governed ones.”<sup>27</sup> By implication this assumedly proved the existence of some sort of “natural right” to reach out and collect, not only objects but therewith cultures so that an oppression within the asymmetrical structures of colonising and colonised was legitimised and “used

<sup>23</sup> Julia Harrison, “Museums as Agencies of Neocolonialism in a Postmodern World,” *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 3, no. 1 (1997): 41, DOI: doi.org/10.1080/10245289708523487 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>24</sup> Folarin Shyllon, “Unraveling History: Return of African Cultural Objects Repatriated and Looted in Colonial Times,” in *Cultural Heritage Issues: The Legacy of Conquest, Colonization and Commerce*, ed. James A. R. Nafziger, and Ann M. Nicgorski (Brill/Nijhoff, 2009), 159, DOI: doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004160361.i-466 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>25</sup> Kevin Coffee, “Cultural inclusion, exclusion and the formative role of museums,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 23, no. 3 (2008): 267, DOI: doi.org/10.1080/09647770802234078 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>26</sup> Sharon Macdonald, “Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities,” *museum and society* 1, no. 1 (2003): 3, <https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/article/view/3/50> (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5. Cf. Sharon Macdonald, “Exhibitions of power and powers of exhibition: an introduction to the politics of display,” in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), (= Heritage: Care–Preservation–Management), 11.

to classify, control and subordinate the colonised both within and outside the West.”<sup>28</sup>

### *Salvation Paradigm*

Besides this, colonial expansion was accompanied by an assumption of “a primitive world in need of preservation, redemption, and representation.”<sup>29</sup> This idea resulted in a relocation of objects to the center of the empire, so that they “could be better conserved and studied in Europe.”<sup>30</sup> Hence, the acclaimed notion of European metropole versus “non-European” periphery was supported; concepts which were tied to presumptions linked to metropolitan modernisation, development and elevation versus peripheral backwardness. Thus, ethnological museums were institutionalised with the alleged belief to “save” the most important achievements of societies which were discerned as assumedly inferior and believed to be bound to disappear and whose “remnants (...) should be preserved for the benefit of future generations.”<sup>31</sup> This conjecture was thus collated in the so-called “salvation paradigm”: The putative assumption of rescuing the objects from “local neglect and ignorance” and “from a destructive history, [as] relics of a vanishing world” lead to the profound vindication of looting as preservation being further substantiated by the idea that “appreciation, knowledge and preservationism determined the right to ownership more than the nationality of producers or the territory of origin.”<sup>32</sup>

### *Western “Scientific” Classification*

Once the colonial power put the objects on display in Europe, these were interpreted as essentialised forms of immediate representations of “indigenous” groups.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the development of museums and the exhibition of objects

<sup>28</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Museums in Late Democracies,” *Humanities Research* 9, no. 1 (2002): 9.

<sup>29</sup> Clifford, *Predicament*, 200.

<sup>30</sup> Astrid Swenson, “The Heritage of Empire,” in *From Plunder to Preservation: Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c.1800-1940*, ed. Astrid Swenson, and Peter Mandler, (British Academy Scholarship Online, 2014), 26, DOI: doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197265413.001.0001 (last accessed 16 May 2019).

<sup>31</sup> The achievements which were perceived as the “most important” from the perspective of the oppressive colonial power. Laura Peers, and Alison K. Brown, “Introduction,” in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, ed. Alison K. Brown, and Laura Peers (Routledge, 2005), 1, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=237356> (last accessed 15 May 2019). Cf. Rebekka Habermas, “Benin Bronzen im Kaiserreich – oder warum koloniale Objekte so viel Ärger machen,” *Historische Anthropologie* 25, no. 3 (2017): 331.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Swenson, “Heritage,” 12. Clifford, *Predicament*, 201. Bianca Gaudenzi, and Astrid Swenson, “Looted Art and Restitution in the Twentieth Century – Towards a Global Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017): 514, DOI: doi.org/10.1177/0022009417692409 (last accessed 29 March 2019).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Habermas, “Benin,” 332.

is directly related to “modern ways of seeing the world.”<sup>34</sup> For this approach, the museum itself embodied the medium par excellence because “[b]y using exhibition as its form of communication, museums set up frozen instances in time and fixed them, unchangeable, as expert truth (...).”<sup>35</sup>

Consequently, this form of display promoted a peculiar self-perception rooting in notions of Western linear progression and development which was reassured by “scientifically” contrasting people(s) using the tools of taxonomy.<sup>36</sup> Thus, objects became an “important way in which colonial societies came to *know* and interpret, even in a limited way, the worlds of those peoples who were part of their empire or imperialistic domain.”<sup>37</sup> The “scientific” knowledge produced and displayed in museums was therefore exploited as a crucial legitimisation of discriminatory and racist theories. Thus,

[f]rom the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, racist theories about the notion of race and racial inferiority prompted various anthropological collections and establishment of Centers. (...) These Centers gather human bones from different regions of the world which are subjected to research in order to scientifically prove how races are different and unequal.<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, nineteenth-century Europeans occupied the level of collectors of the world at which they could gaze at and comprehend in the design of an organised exhibition as they were consumed by “[t]he idea that there was still much in the world to be “discovered” and thereby “understood” by Western science”.<sup>39</sup> This ultimately served as a form of detachment, as a form of assigning positions of observer and observed which is rooted in an asymmetry of power in the guise of the “‘seeing-man,’ (...) whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess.”<sup>40</sup>

### *Denial of Coevalness*

Accordingly, “[t]he museum collections created during this period unsurprisingly bring with them connotations of imperial rule, repression and plunder”.<sup>41</sup> As

<sup>34</sup> Macdonald, “Exhibitions,” 10.

<sup>35</sup> Ashley, “First Nations,” 31.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Kaschuba, “Aufgeklärter Kolonialismus: eine heilbare Schizophrenie?,” *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaft* 9, no. 1 (2015): 102, DOI: doi.org/10.14361/zfk-2015-0114 (last accessed 15 May 2019).

<sup>37</sup> Harrison, “Agencies,” 45 (emphasis in original).

<sup>38</sup> Pape, “Postcolonial,” 5.

<sup>39</sup> Harrison, “Agencies,” 56.

<sup>40</sup> Pratt, *Imperial*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Emma Martin, “Charles Bell’s collection of ‘curios’. Acquisitions and encounters during a Himalayan journey,” in *Narrating Objects, Collecting Stories*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley et al. (London/New York: Routledge, 2012), 167–183.

a consequence, the exhibition modes also created an imagination of “non-European” regions as a place which was clearly separated from “Europe” not only in terms of location but also in terms of temporality. Consequently, the “European” imagination constituted a notion of the African continent as an environment in which peoples organised themselves (solely) in tribal structures associated with assumedly retrograde forms of customs and rites.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to this was the self-perception and presentation of “European history [as] an entelechy of universal reason”.<sup>43</sup> It is in this conception of “[t]he denial of coevalness” that the colonial stare objectified “non-Europeans” through the study of anthropology as “traditional” and “atemporal”.<sup>44</sup> This is what Johannes Fabian constituted as “the *allochronism* of anthropology”.<sup>45</sup>

Accordingly, exhibitions in colonial times ignored transnational history and reciprocal developments as “collections have been purified (...) within a Western-generated grammar of difference that is mute to all and any process, transformation, or intercultural relationship that might have created links between Europe and elsewhere.”<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, only recently the historian Rebekka Habermas (2017) has pointed out that also today a “staggering majority” of museums neither exhibits and therefore consequently neglects to present the impact of transcultural influences nor makes the colonial history of their collections an accessible subject of discussion.<sup>47</sup> This neglect accounts for one of the characteristics of the term “colonial aphasia” which the anthropologist Ann L. Stoler coined: the dismissal of the circumstances of the objects’ acquisition which persists to be a problem of contemporary Western museums, their collections and the chosen mode of display.<sup>48</sup> This ignorance or concealment can be

<sup>42</sup> Of course, colonialism was not restricted to the African continent, but as the analytical part of this paper focuses specifically on a collaboration with Tanzania, it seems appropriate to refer here to colonialism on the African continent as an example. Also, this denotes the notion of “Africa” as an assumedly homogenous place which ignores the diversity of the people and their cultures. However, this notion of a denied coevalness was certainly true for a majority – if not all – colonised territories.

<sup>43</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), (= Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History), 29.

<sup>44</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press 2014), 39. My own translation. In original: „traditionell“, „zeitlos“. Helmut Groschwitz, “Und was ist mit Europa? Zur Überwindung der Grenzen zwischen ›Europa‹ und ›Außer-Europa‹ in den ethnologischen Sammlungen Berlins,” in *Quo vadis, Völkerkundemuseum? Aktuelle Debatten zu ethnologischen Sammlungen in Museen und Universitäten*, ed. Michael Kraus, and Karoline Noack (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015), (= Edition Museum 16), 216, DOI: doi.org/10.14361/9783839432358-010 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>45</sup> Fabian, *Time*, 32.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony Shelton, “Critical Museology. A Manifesto,” *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* 1, no. 1 (2013): 17, DOI: doi.org/10.3167/armw.2013.010102 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>47</sup> My own translation. In original: „überwältigende Mehrzahl“. Habermas, “Benin,” 331.

<sup>48</sup> Ann L. Stoler, “Colonial Aphasia. Race and Disabled Histories in France,” *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 121-156.

considered as an “occlusion of knowledge”, as a matter of fact a “*political condition*” which as a discursive dimension contributes to the construction and reproduction of inequality.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.2 *Critical Museology* and the Politics of Re-Presentation

While critique concerning Western forms of display and exhibition have emerged through the “active contestations of indigenous peoples” challenging the “overwriting [of] indigenous systems of expressive culture with Eurocentric and essentializing notions of *both* art and artifact”, the central character of museums as places of hoarding and exhibiting objects was already criticised in the eighteenth century in the context of Napoleon’s exorbitant acquisition of objects in the course of his campaigns.<sup>50</sup> Subsequently, Futurist as well as Marxist critics of the twentieth century perceived museums as “[b]ound by tradition and inherently conservative” so that this particular institution “cannot help but represent the values and interests of the dominant elite.”<sup>51</sup>

Due to the concomitance of the systematic institutionalisation of Western museums with colonialism, critics have attributed museums with reinforced hegemonic modes of power: “the ‘non-Western’ being ‘received and displayed’ in the ‘West’.”<sup>52</sup> In this context, it has been emphasised that “[d]ecisions about how cultures are presented reflect deeper judgments of power and authority (...).”<sup>53</sup> This assertion can be seen as following up with the so-called “crisis of representation” in the discipline of anthropology which was highly debated in the course of the *Writing Culture* critique of the 1980s.<sup>54</sup> This controversy targets aspects of re-presentation with a focus on ethnographic writing orbiting around issues of a “*specification of discourses* in ethnography: “[W]ho speaks? [W]ho writes? [W]hen and where? [W]ith or to whom? [U]nder what institu-

<sup>49</sup> Stoler, *Duress*, 12 (emphasis in original).

<sup>50</sup> Phillips, “Art-Thropology,” 9. Ruth B. Philipps, “Exhibiting Africa after Modernism: Globalization, Pluralism, and the Persistent Paradigms of Art and Artifact,” in *Museums after Modernism. Strategies of Engagement*, ed. Griselda Pollock, and Joyce Zemans (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 81 (emphasis in original), DOI: doi.org/10.1002/9780470776636.ch4 (last accessed 29 May 2019). Cf. Andrea Witcomb, *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London: Routledge, 2003), 16.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Wood, “Display, Restitution and World Art History: The Case of the ‘Benin Bronzes,’” *Visual Culture in Britain* 13, no. 1 (2012): 117, DOI: doi.org/10.1080/14714787.2012.641854 (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>53</sup> Steven D. Lavine, and Ivan Karp, “Introduction: Museums and Multiculturalism,” in *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp, and Steven D. Lavine (Washington/London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>54</sup> James Clifford, and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley/LA: University of California Press, 1986).

tional and historical constraints?”<sup>55</sup> While this debate addressed ethnographic texts, it can be easily applied to the context of visual exhibitions like those of colonial objects in contemporary European museums as they are concerned with similar questions such as “[W]ho is empowered or disempowered by certain modes of display?”<sup>56</sup>

*“Provincialising” Western Representations of Colonial Objects*

The historian Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the non-recognition of “non-European” system of knowledge, the “inequality of ignorance”.<sup>57</sup> Museums as centers of remembrance and constituents of historiography should be recognised as having the power “to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it.”<sup>58</sup> This is to be pursued in the manner of Chakrabarty’s summon for “provincializing ‘Europe’” so that “European” systems of knowledge are deconstructed with regard to their presumed universality which has been substantiated by and which itself has vice versa substantiated imperialism.<sup>59</sup> This “knowledge” and by implication power is assumed as a mode of possessing voice and agency. Whereas in unequal relationships there is one which dictates the voice to the other, consequently depriving one of one’s own ability to speak but to be spoken of and for in the way that “there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presentation*, or a representation.”<sup>60</sup>

Thus, there has been harsh criticism by Western scholars in the wave of postcolonial and poststructuralist theory arguing that “[m]useums are a supreme expression of imperialist Europe – publicly funded institutions devoted to colonial sensibilities.”<sup>61</sup> In 1991, Lavine and Karp stated that “[e]very museum exhibition (...) inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore, *critical museology*, as a field of study, is particularly concerned with “contestations

<sup>55</sup> James Clifford, “Introduction: Partial Truths,” in *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford, and George E. Marcus (Berkeley/LA: University of California Press, 1986), 13 (emphasis in original).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. “epistemic violence”: Anita Moser, *Die Kunst der Grenzüberschreitung. Postkoloniale Kritik im Spannungsfeld von Ästhetik und Politik* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), (= Image 17), 38. Cf. Kristie Dotson, “Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing,” *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 236, [www.jstor.org/stable/23016544](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23016544) (last accessed 29 May 2019). Macdonald, “Exhibitions,” 4.

<sup>57</sup> Chakrabarty, “Provincializing,” 28.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>60</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 21 (emphasis in original).

<sup>61</sup> Ashley, “First Nations,” 31.

<sup>62</sup> Lavine/Karp, “Introduction,” 1.

over representation, power, possession, or voice” and with deconstructing the enshrined norms of operational museology.<sup>63</sup> This plays a pivotal role when considering the exhibition of objects from formerly colonised societies in Western museums.

In 1997, James Clifford declared that “the notion that indigenous artworks somehow *belong* in majority (scientific or fine-art) museums is no longer self-evident.”<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, *critical museology* operates within the mode of post-colonial theory and, as a consequence, the movement unveils and questions “the historical master narrative that positions Europe at the center of the world” and rather strives to “replace this narrative with alternative accounts.”<sup>65</sup> Because Anthony Shelton’s assertion is key to understanding the premise of *critical museology*, this paper makes use of his quotation at length:

As a field of study it [critical museology] interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optical regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse organizational structures that taken together constitute a field of cultural and artistic production, articulated through public and private museums (...). These fields are clearly related to competing subfields of power relations and economic regimes that are made partially visible through ideas and counter ideas of patrimony and social identity (...).<sup>66</sup>

This interweaving of representation and power is thus crucial for apprehending the issues at hand. As there exist specific politics of representation, it can never be regarded without taking into consideration diverse socio-historical circumstances as it contributes to a specific kind of knowledge because – according to Foucault – “[e]ach society has its ‘general politics’ of ‘truth’: that is the type of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true; (...) the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.”<sup>67</sup> In this regard museums can be seen as one of the “regimes of practices” in which “[t]his knowledge is produced”.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Phillips, “Art-Thropology,” 18.

<sup>64</sup> Clifford, “Contact,” 211 (emphasis in original).

<sup>65</sup> Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns*, 154.

<sup>66</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 8.

<sup>67</sup> Michel Foucault, “The political function of the intellectual,” *Radical Philosophy* 017 (1977): 13, [www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp17\\_article2\\_politicalfunctionofintellectual\\_foucault.pdf](http://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp17_article2_politicalfunctionofintellectual_foucault.pdf) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

<sup>68</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), (= The Heritage: Care–Preservation–Management), 193.

### *Re-Presentation and the Discursive Construction of Inequality*

*Critical museology* with its inherent postcolonial acknowledgment is thus “crucial for developing new exhibitionary genres, telling untold stories, rearticulating knowledge systems for public dissemination, reimagining organizational and management structures, and repurposing museums and galleries in line with multicultural and intercultural states and communities.”<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, this field of study seeks to “challenge dominant views of the museum as a site of power relations” in order to “invoke and encourage new relations between museum and communities.”<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the discipline contests traditional museum practices and has addressed issues such as “participation and inclusion with the aim of creating unbiased cultural representations”.<sup>71</sup> Hence, it is pursued to contest the lack of both, manifold perspectives and a diverse polyphony in European exhibitions of colonial objects – which possess a “polysemic quality” – and thus to question a labelling form of re-presentation in order to make way for reclaiming voice and agency which “was almost entirely ignored by operational museology.”<sup>72</sup> This alludes to the concept that Gayatri C. Spivak (among others) theorised as “subalternity”. Spivak recognises the inherent objectification on behalf of European elites which presents a lack of subject-self-constitution: “the lost self of the colonies”.<sup>73</sup>

However, as the discipline of *critical museology* developed, “[g]eographical distance is no longer sufficient to ensure the separation of object and subject, as evidenced by the growing and rightful refusal of communities, artists, and individuals to remain silenced on issues of institutional objectification and ownership rights.”<sup>74</sup> Therefore, contemporary approaches have deconstructed the unrealistic “separation between domestic and ‘foreign’ cultures”, have put claim to challenge Western appropriation of re-presentation of objects that were abducted during colonial rule and have aimed at bringing forth alternative forms of museums’ operational work such as the concept of museums as *contact zones*.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 7.

<sup>70</sup> Witcomb, *Re-Imagining*, 70.

<sup>71</sup> Ashley, “First Nations,” 32.

<sup>72</sup> Rhiannon Mason, “Cultural Theory and Museum Studies,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 20, DOI: doi.org/10.1002/9780470996836 (last accessed 16 May 2019). Shelton, “Critical,” 13.

<sup>73</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives,” *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247.

<sup>74</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 18-19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



### 2.3 Museums as *Contact Zones*

In order to surmount the intrinsic legacy of colonialism and the crisis of representation, a specific form of postcolonial approach within the museum emerged when museums started “promoting their now realized postcolonial status through inclusionist programs in exhibitions, shared curatorship, and use of collections” particularly in the last decade of the twentieth century.<sup>76</sup> The opinion that a multivocal approach can assist for relationships to “be created around artefacts” supported the conceptualisation of the theory of museums as *contact zones* which aims at making “relations between collecting institutions and their stakeholders far more equitable”.<sup>77</sup>

The concept of *contact zones* in museums pursues the goal of involving source communities in negotiations of the “presentation of their patrimony in museums” and strives for “partnership rather than superficial involvement.”<sup>78</sup> What follows from this is that this relationship should be based on holding both parties as equals, ultimately involving a “changing relations of power” which means that “source community members have come to be defined as authorities on their own cultures and material heritage.”<sup>79</sup>

#### *Manifestations of Contact Zones in the Museum*

The *contact zone* can be manifested in different ways of collaboration between members of source communities and museum staff in order to open up for the chance of social and cultural participation. Examples of such collaborative measures are e.g. “[f]ocused exhibits and community participation”, the (temporal or infinite) loan of objects and sharing expertise through curator residencies and workshops because *contact zones* “are constituted through reciprocal movements of people, not just of objects, messages, commodities, and money.”<sup>80</sup> Especially with regard to the interpretation of objects, this concept can thus bear fruitful outcomes related to the contested and inscribed meaning of the objects which finally can be re-read in the context of a multi-perspective approach.

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<sup>76</sup> Boast, “Neocolonial,” 56.

<sup>77</sup> Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 5. Boast, “Neocolonial,” 57. Originally, the term *contact zone* was coined by the literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt who elaborated on this in the article “Arts of the Contact Zone” and later in her book *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Most prominently, it was James Clifford who appropriated Pratt’s concept and projected the very same onto the field of museology in the chapter “Museums as Contact Zones”. Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991), [www.jstor.org/stable/25595469](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469) (last accessed 27 May 2019). Pratt, *Imperial*. Clifford, “Contact.”

<sup>78</sup> Boast, “Neocolonial,” 56. Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ashley, “First Nations,” 38. Clifford, “Contact,” 195.

Nevertheless, as various forms of collaboration have emerged, it needs to be acknowledged that they can differ profoundly in their scope (e.g. financial, temporal). Such different understandings of *contact zones* are for example mere consultation of source communities for the primary benefit of museums in contrast to a more profound collaboration which would include an “authority in displaying and interpreting those objects” further resulting in an “active collaboration and a sharing of authority.”<sup>81</sup> In this regard, the aspirations and goals of all involved stakeholders can diverge. Thus, “[f]or many source communities, collaboration means full and equal partnership in all stages of a project; it is a recognition of their expertise and their attachment to objects that are central to their culture, and their participation will often be based upon expectations of community benefit.”<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, communities often wish for a continued involvement which does not end with the expiration of a particular project or exhibition. Of course, this model challenges the museum’s “curatorial authority” and might culminate in calls for definite repatriation of objects – a topic which has just recently become a heatedly debated issue and has contributed to some European countries finding themselves in complex disputes over restitution.<sup>83</sup> In the following analysis, it will be assessed in which way the project *Humboldt Lab Tanzania* can be regarded as a *contact zone* approach aimed at shifting perspectives and at levelling out discursive inequalities which are rooted in specific forms of re-presentation.

### 3 Analysis

In the light of the imminent completion of the *HF*, a controversy has evolved due to the colonial objects and the cultural appropriation the museum has been associated with. This debate is concerned with the profound question of how former European imperial powers confront their colonial history. This includes the question of whether or not Western museums reinforce respectively reproduce discursive constructions of inequality.

Whereas international media called the project “A New Museum [that] Opens Old Wounds in Germany”, it has been hailed in the tradition of “bestowing the nation of culture with a voice” on behalf of the German government.<sup>84</sup> Taking into consideration these diverting approaches, questions of voice and

<sup>81</sup> Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 2. Clifford, “Contact,” 210.

<sup>82</sup> Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>84</sup> Graham Bowley, “A New Museum Opens Old Wounds in Germany,” *New York Times*, 12 October 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/arts/design/humboldt-forum-germany.html> (last accessed 14 January 2020). My own translation. In original: „Der Kulturnation Stimme verleihen“. Die Bundesregierung, *Ohne Kultur keine Tradition und Fortschritt*, [www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/ohne-kultur-keine-tradition-und-kein-fortschritt-1541164](http://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/ohne-kultur-keine-tradition-und-kein-fortschritt-1541164) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

agency have arisen around matters such as: Whose culture will be displayed (by whom and in which way)? Whose voice will be heard (by whom and in which way)?

### 3.1 Discursive Constructions: “Non-European” as the Other

In the debate on the *HF*, one of the points of critique is concerned with the emphasis of the “non-European” origin of the objects: “The Humboldt Forum will facilitate the *experience of non-European art and culture*, and thereby *knowledge about the world*, making possible intercultural exchange and *encouraging curiosity and enthusiasm about unfamiliar realms*.”<sup>85</sup> Focusing at an “intercultural exchange”, ergo a dialogue, and at the processing of the history of colonialism, the website of the *HF* also calls attention to the agenda of the *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin* to deal critically with the legacy and consequences of colonial rule.<sup>86</sup> However, while appreciating the aim of entering into a dialogue, remarks made by the President of the Prussian Heritage Foundation, Hermann Parzinger, about Berlin’s unique opportunity and historical continuity contradict this acclaimed objective: “(...) from here [*Stadtschloss*, Hohenzollern residence, Berlin] emanated academic *curiosity* for what is *foreign* and *different* around the globe.”<sup>87</sup> The language used with colonial tropes such as “curiosity” is closely tied to notions of expeditionary and colonial endeavours and thus inextricably linked to the violent subjugation of peoples. Instead of acknowledging the sensitivity that such words inevitably carry, this remark can rather be seen in the context of “colonial aphasia”, the forgetting, the apparent inarticulacy, of colonial entanglements. In this regard it can be said that the focus on expressions such as “non-European”, “foreign” and “different” can be read as a form of Othering in the way that a “binary division between Europe and the ‘other’” is denoted.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, praising the *HF* by using the Eurocentric construction of Germany apparently being in “need(s) [of] a place for the exchange of the views, goals, and experiences of other cultures and societies” ignores any approaches towards critical tendencies dealing with colonial objects and their representation.<sup>89</sup> This statement puts the focus on the *HF* being a representational

<sup>85</sup> Parzinger, *Humboldt*, 15 (emphasis added).

<sup>86</sup> In original: „Dabei wird sich das Ethnologische Museum auch mit dem Erbe und den Konsequenzen der Kolonialherrschaft und der Rolle Europas kritisch auseinandersetzen.“ Museen im Humboldt Forum, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, <https://www.humboldtforum.org/de/inhalte/museen> (last accessed 14 January 2020).

<sup>87</sup> Parzinger, *Humboldt*, 9 (emphasis added).

<sup>88</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 17. This is not least true in spatial terms, as the *HF* will be located opposite to the Museum Island which hosts most of the “European” collections within institutions such as the Bode Museum and the Old National Gallery.

<sup>89</sup> Parzinger, *Humboldt*, 15.

project for Germany as a national flagship or “national representational project” rather than aiming at dismantling the colonial perspectives still inherent in today’s museums or at critically dealing with colonial history, the history of the collections or allowing for the inclusion of the voice of people from the source communities.<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, a specific paternalism, as another indicator for the asymmetrical relationship, is highlighted when claiming that within the *HF* “non-European art is *confidentially* shown next to early European (...) art.”<sup>91</sup> This is further emphasised by the *HF* being elevated as “a site of world culture” which leaves one with more than a mere tang of a Eurocentric approach.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Europe’s self-assured role is rendered by stating that “world cultures become participants in the most distinguished location in Germany”.<sup>93</sup> Statements like this can and need to be critically assessed with regard to Spivak’s, Hall’s as well as Chakrabarty’s contributions to the postcolonial discourse.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, reminiscing the salvation paradigm, the federal government commissioner for culture and the media, Monika Grütters, refers to the *HF* as a “visible manifestation for the responsibility and care that Germany takes for the cultural heritage of mankind”.<sup>95</sup> While this statement leaves the source communities aside and puts Germany into a position of power, it reinforces a context of domination. However, the concept of *contact zones* denies such an asymmetrical approach and much rather focuses on cooperation with museums in the originating regions of the objects.

In 2016, the collection of the *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin*, entailed around 500,000 objects of which the majority’s provenance was unresolved.<sup>96</sup> This paper, is especially concerned with the so-called “Africa collection [that] encompasses some 75,000 objects” and which is proclaimed as being “among the most significant of its kind in the world.”<sup>97</sup> The website of the *Ethnologisches Museum* declares that “[a]t the time of the Berlin Conference in

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<sup>90</sup> My own translation. In original: „nationales Repräsentationsprojekt“. Friedrich von Bose, “Strategische Reflexivität. Das Berliner Humboldt Forum und die postkoloniale Kritik,” in *Historische Anthropologie. Kultur – Gesellschaft – Alltag* 25, no. 3 (2017): 410.

<sup>91</sup> Parzinger, *Humboldt*, 6 (emphasis added).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>94</sup> An in-depth analysis of this exceeds the frame of this paper.

<sup>95</sup> *Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien*. My own translation. In original: „Damit ist das Humboldt Forum auch sichtbares Zeichen dafür, dass die Bundesrepublik Deutschland Verantwortung und Fürsorge für das kulturelle Erbe der Menschheit übernimmt“. Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, *Bund*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Friedrich von Bose, *Das Humboldt-Forum. Eine Ethnographie seiner Planung* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2016), 235.

<sup>97</sup> Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, “Ethnologisches Museum. About the Collection,” [www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/ethnologisches-museum/collection-research/about-the-collection.html](http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/ethnologisches-museum/collection-research/about-the-collection.html) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

1884/85, it comprised just 7,000 objects, but was expanded by 50,000 works during the colonial era.”<sup>98</sup> In this context it can be referred to the art historian Christian Kravagna who determines that boasting with the quantities of the scope of collections can be regarded as a “shameless discourse of the ones possessing”.<sup>99</sup> Bearing in mind this great number, it becomes clear that most of the objects are kept in store in museums such as the *Ethnologisches Museum* without being exhibited and without having their provenance determined.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, there is no mention of the (largely) violence-induced acquisition of the objects. Therefore, the presentation on the website denies the “heterogenous and conflicted contexts in which many collections were made” and eschews any controversial discourse.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the social-political circumstances surrounding the seizure of the objects are not explicitly disclosed on the website of the *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin*, a fact which can be related to the “colonial aphasia” that Stoller has sketched.

However, it is mentioned that “[n]umerous objects came to Berlin through a network of traders, collectors, colonial officers and civil servants established by the founder of the museum Adolf Bastian. Their historical significance has often had to be reconstructed insofar as has been possible.”<sup>102</sup> The interesting question in this regard would be in which way this “historical significance” has been reconstructed and represented and whether this symbolises an appropriation on behalf of Western museum professionals.

Regarding databases as a format of *contact zones* by providing a specific system of accessibility, it is to be appreciated that the *Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* has digitalised objects of its “Africa collection” in its online collections database (*SMB-digital*). However, it appears to be little more than a mere gesture. There are two main points of critique in this assessment: The online descriptions do not specify whether or not the provenance of the objects has been clarified which impedes one of the main purposes of digitalisation, namely the facilitation of restitution claims.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the online database is only

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> My own translation. In original: „schamloser Diskurs der Besitzenden“. Christian Kravagna, “Vom ethnologischen Museum zum unmöglichen Kolonialmuseum,” *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 9, no. 1 (2015): 98, DOI: doi.org/10.14361/zfk-2015-0113 (last accessed 15 May 2019).

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Sandrine Micossé-Aikins, “Vorwärtsgen, ohne zurückzublicken – eine kolonialismuskritische aktivistische Perspektive auf das Humboldtforum,” in *Decolonize the City! Zur Kolonialität der Stadt – Gespräche | Aushandlungen | Perspektiven*, ed. Zwischenraum Kollektiv (Münster: UNRAST-Verlag, 2017), 122.

<sup>101</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 11.

<sup>102</sup> Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, “Collections.”

<sup>103</sup> Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, “SMB-digital. Online collections database,” [www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&lang=en](http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&lang=en) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

available in German which clearly represents a language barrier and therefore yet another obstacle for claims of restitution.

### 3.2 *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*

In the context of collaborations of museums and source communities, Peers and Brown have noted that “[s]ome of the most successful solutions have emerged from projects involving the hiring of source community members to assist in-house and to act as liaisons between their communities and heritage institutions”.<sup>104</sup> This part of the paper is concerned with analysing one such format concerned with questions of cultural heritage. The so-called *Humboldt Lab Tanzania* constitutes a multi-disciplinary project which was executed as a follow-up of the *Humboldt Lab Dahlem*. In the following, this paper will look at how the *Tanzania Lab* has been evaluated on behalf of the participants by examining their assessment in the trilingual publication (German, English, Kiswahili) *Humboldt Lab Tanzania. Objects from the Colonial Wars in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin – A Tanzanian-German Dialogue*.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, the *Humboldt Lab Dahlem* ran from 2012 to 2015 as a form of trying out experimental methods of exhibition in the context of preparation for the grand opening of the *HF*.<sup>106</sup> The project was aligned towards an approach of collaborative research on the collections from Tanzania which was under German colonial rule as so-called “German East Africa”. During this time Maji-Maji people rebelled against the imperial domination. However, the rebellion was violently subdued. In the course of German colonisation, objects were expropriated and transferred from local to imperial ownership. Hence, these objects are the focal point of the *Tanzania Lab* as it is concerned with researching the objects’ provenance as well as their polysemic meaning. In 2015, Flower Manase, curator at the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam acknowledged the plan of including the story of the Maji Maji rebellion against German colonial rule (1905-1907) in the exhibitions. According to an article of *The Guardian*, Manase hopes “that the Humboldt Forum can help close the gap that has emerged between how Germans have told the story of their colonisation of Tanzania and how the Tanzanians have viewed that past” and further goes on

<sup>104</sup> Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>105</sup> Note that *Humboldt Lab Tanzania* and *Tanzania Lab* will be used interchangeably in the subsequent analysis. *Humboldt Lab Tanzania. Objects from the Colonial Wars in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin – A Tanzanian-German Dialogue*, ed. Lili Reyels, and Paola Ivanov, and Kristin Weber-Sinn (Berlin: Reimer, 2018).

<sup>106</sup> Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, “Humboldt Forum. Humboldt Lab Dahlem,” [www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/humboldt-forum/about-the-humboldt-forum/humboldt-lab.html](http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/humboldt-forum/about-the-humboldt-forum/humboldt-lab.html) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

by stating that “Germans have had their own way of talking about their past and the Maji Maji (...).”<sup>107</sup>

This statement is closely related to what French President Macron assessed in the context of his visit at the University of Ouagadougou: “The history of Africa cannot only be written by European specialists on Africa, and we must promote, continue and help complete a history of Africa written by Africans.”<sup>108</sup> Therefore, the inclusion of “indigenous” stakeholders is key to a relation on equal grounds. Hence, inclusionist programmes, empowerment, access to the patrimony, voice and responsibility in the question of interpretation of the objects in e.g. shared curatorship are thus central for tackling the inherent inequality within the relationship of European museums and source communities. In this regard, the initiative *NoHumboldt21!* also demands that “the “Preußischer Kulturbesitz” foundation makes an effort to ensure that experts from the countries of the [G]lobal [S]outh are involved in presenting their own works in a way that promotes equality of opportunity, has an awareness of power dynamics and focusses on portraying similarities between peoples.”<sup>109</sup>

Following the *Tanzania Lab*, the aforementioned publication was issued which includes a reflection on the collaboration and further provides background knowledge on matters concerned with “colonial aphasia” and remembrance. Additionally, a catalogue of objects is included which was developed in joint partnership. However, it is already mentioned in the publication’s “Foreword” that the curator of the Tanzania collections of the *Ethnologisches Museum* Berlin was hoping for a collaboration which would encompass an “in-depth provenance research into the Museum’s Tanzania collection (...) in collaboration with colleagues from Tanzania.”<sup>110</sup> However, financial aspects denied such an expanded scope as “German research funding, while often envisaging their [local experts] involvement, would seldom commit to the wholesale financing of partners from other countries.”<sup>111</sup> However, the final project was ultimately sponsored by “funding from the Kuratorium Preußischer Kulturbesitz” which contributed to the “creation of a full-time post for a scientific researcher and a part-time post for a museologist.”<sup>112</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Michael Scaturro, “Berlin’s rebuilt Prussian palace to address long-ignored colonial atrocities,” *Guardian*, 18 May 2015, [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/18/berlins-rebuilt-prussian-palace-to-address-long-ignored-colonial-atrocities](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/18/berlins-rebuilt-prussian-palace-to-address-long-ignored-colonial-atrocities) (last accessed 14 January 2020).

<sup>108</sup> Macron, “Speech.”

<sup>109</sup> *NoHumboldt21!*, “Construction.”

<sup>110</sup> Lili Reyels, and Paola Ivanov, and Kristin Weber-Sinn, “Foreword,” in *Humboldt Lab Tanzania. Objects from the Colonial Wars in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin – A Tanzanian-German Dialogue*, ed. Lili Reyels, and Paola Ivanov, and Kristin Weber-Sinn (Berlin: Reimer, 2018), 28.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

The proclaimed goal of the project was to map out “different historical and current perspectives on the objects in Germany as well as in Tanzania” and “to promote a wider discussion with Tanzanian experts, civil society and the general public, about the fact that in the collections of Ethnologisches Museum there are objects connected with the wars waged by the German colonial power on the territory of modern-day Tanzania.”<sup>113</sup> Through a project collaboration beyond national boundaries in form of a “comprehensive transnational project” it was tried “to test out formats for discussion, research and dialogue.”<sup>114</sup> It has been denoted that “a prerequisite was a dialogue between experts from both countries, as well as sufficient information from civil society in terms of value and dignity of the objects concerned.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, this corresponds with the willingness of finding “mutually acceptable solutions” regarding “sensitive objects with personal meaning and/or sacred purpose”.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly this points towards a *contact zone* approach aiming at achieving a step towards eliminating the inequality so inherent in the re-presentation of colonial objects in European museums.

Besides concepts of “creative practices”, the project also contributed to the exhibition *Living Inside the Story* which was displayed in Dar es Salaam and which engaged with objects from the collections of the National Museum and House of Culture.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, the collaboration also involved a trip of Tanzanian artists to Berlin and a Tanzanian-German Conference at the *Goethe-Institut Tanzania*, Dar es Salaam which exemplifies a curator residency as a manifestation of a *contact zone*. These points of collaboration can be read in the light of the theory of museums as *contact zones*.

In general, the editors of the publication (and by implication participants in the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*) have perceived the collaboration as a positive starting point in order to offer “guidance on how research into provenance and contemporary significance(s) of historical ethnological collections can take place through the form of cooperative projects.”<sup>118</sup> Therefore, a future partnership is thus envisaged in a continued “exchange of information on the provenance of the objects and issues of their present whereabouts”.<sup>119</sup> The publication further pleads that “stakeholders from the respective societies of origin” should gain access to the collections which should be accompanied by “long-term and

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<sup>113</sup> Lili Reyels, “The Humboldt Lab Tanzania in Context,” in *Humboldt Lab Tanzania. Objects from the Colonial Wars in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin – A Tanzanian-German Dialogue*, ed. Lili Reyels, and Paola Ivanov, and Kristin Weber-Sinn (Berlin: Reimer, 2018), 50. Reyels/Ivanov/Weber-Sinn, “Foreword,” 30.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 28, 30.

<sup>115</sup> Reyels, “Humboldt,” 48.

<sup>116</sup> Peers/Brown, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>117</sup> Reyels/Ivanov/Weber-Sinn, “Foreword,” 34. Reyels, “Humboldt,” 52.

<sup>118</sup> Reyels/Ivanov/Weber-Sinn, “Foreword,” 30.

<sup>119</sup> Reyels, “Humboldt,” 54.



sustained forms of cooperation.”<sup>120</sup> This denotes the importance of *contact zones* not expiring with a specific project but rather aiming at long-term formats of involvement of members of the source communities. It is furthermore concluded that the *Tanzania Lab* contributed to building “trust” as well as to establishing “contact and dialogue” which proves that mutual commitment is integral for a positive outcome of *contact zones* and which seems to be applicable in this case.<sup>121</sup>

A beneficial aspect for the source communities in Tanzania can be seen in the way in which “the extensive dimensions of the historical collection originating from former German East Africa and contained in the present Ethnologisches Museum, have been made public to their full extent for the first time in Tanzania: to museums, political and civil society.”<sup>122</sup> This inaugurating access to the objects to members of the source communities can be seen as a commitment on behalf of the *HF* to engage in the relationship as part of a *contact zone*. However, it is furthermore underlined that ensuring the accessibility of the collections to the source communities is the “responsibility of the Ethnologisches Museum and in the future of the Humboldt Forum”.<sup>123</sup>

With regard to the assigned meaning to the objects it has been pointed out that the embodied, the lived experience in connection to the objects, is of foremost importance to the source communities and that these “continue to be part of the store of knowledge of these societies.”<sup>124</sup> Such a realisation can be welcomed as it contributes to a comprehension of the objects’ value beyond the value for the museum itself. However, the editors acknowledge the problem of an attached superiority to the objects as they “were status symbols, and to a certain extent they still are today.”<sup>125</sup> This remark can be seen in relation to Parzinger’s statement about the importance of cultural goods for the image of a nation: “Nothing defines a country’s image in the world more than its cultural sites.”<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, it is recognised that “any kind of exhibition of these objects in Berlin is inevitably also a form of appropriation and a certain reproduction of colonial (power) relationships, which should be made visible, critically interrogated and deconstructed.”<sup>127</sup> Additionally, it is outlined that further research needs to focus on “reconstructing the narratives that accompanied colonialism

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<sup>120</sup> Reyels/Ivanov/Weber-Sinn, “Foreword,” 34.

<sup>121</sup> Reyels, “Humboldt,” 54.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 42–43.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>126</sup> Parzinger, *Humboldt*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> Reyels, “Humboldt,” 54.

and these objects in both countries”.<sup>128</sup> Inevitably, such an approach will ultimately deal with the politics of re-presentation including questions of display and ownership and the deconstruction of operational museology. What can thus be inferred is that the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania* can be regarded as a starting point for more thorough investigations and further collaborations whose funding is the responsibility of public sponsors such as the German government.

#### 4 Conclusion

As has been exemplified, the current civil contestation of the issue of colonial objects in European museums has contributed to it having become a topic within the international political sphere. While the roots of the institution of the museum in imperial ideas and outdated anthropological paradigms is evident, museums have to acknowledge their responsibility to decolonise their operational work including specific forms of re-presentation. Such forms have manifested themselves through discourses contributing to inequalities such as alleged “truths” which feed on stereotypes and racism. However, although admittedly late, it seems as if a confrontation and reappraisal of the colonial past is – though slowly but finally – emerging.

In the format of projects such as the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*, partnerships between source communities and (European) museums can begin to grow if these collaborations are founded on equitable grounds. Thus, modes of power-sharing can pave the way for a “more egalitarian co-operative projects with African museums.”<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, although projects such as the *Tanzania Lab* seem to be a convenient point of departure, a lot has to be done to strive for a profound equality in the relationship of Western museums and source communities. This should not least start with re-structuring the institution of the museum itself and by critically questioning one’s own practices, the narratives which are employed and the politics behind them, so that the museum can “become truly postcolonial, not only chronologically, but constitutionally”.<sup>130</sup>

In the light of the discursive emphasis of “European” and “non-European” collections, the necessity to deconstruct such binary structures becomes apparent. Furthermore, this should entail a controversial discourse about the colonial intricacies of the museums’ collections beyond temporally limited projects such as the *Humboldt Lab Tanzania*. While this project can be seen as a starting point

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>129</sup> Anthony Shelton, “Curating African Worlds,” in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, ed. Alison K. Brown, and Laura Peers (Routledge, 2005), 185, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=237356> (last accessed 15 May 2019).

<sup>130</sup> Itala Vivan, “What Museum for Africa?”, in *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, ed. Ian Chambers et al. (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 196.

of working through the implications of colonialism and of confronting the crisis of representation within the institution of the museum, it cannot be sufficient but must focus on an everlasting collaboration taking into consideration the views and the voices of the source communities. This can also include claims for repatriation of colonial objects that the German government needs to address. The potential as well as the responsibility for cultural education that lies within such institutions needs to be aspiring to nothing less than unveiling that “[e]very history is a constructed fiction and every fiction has its own history.”<sup>131</sup>

To conclude this paper, limits thereof and points of departure for further research should be indicated. While the case study indeed is an interesting one, it needs to be determined that a more profound inclusion of voices from the source communities would have been desirable. In this context, it could have been interesting to e.g. include an insight into the current situation of museums on the African continent with regard to i.e. their infrastructure, facilities etc.<sup>132</sup> However, the sources for this endeavour are – to date – still limited. Nevertheless, now that the debate has been spurred, it will hopefully become possible that the diversity of voices and the multi-perspectivity which both imperatively enclose the debate on colonial objects will not only be rendered audible and visible for museum visitors but also for the general public.

Additionally, it must be assessed that this paper’s theoretical part is highly informed by the expositions of Western academics. In order to provide a more complex understanding, the inclusion of a greater diversity of authorship would have been desirable. Furthermore, while the theoretical part of this paper is – at times – a bit too elaborate, the analytical part would have benefited from a more thorough investigation which could have possibly taken into consideration the political and legal dimension (on national as well as on EU level) of collaborations between European museums and source communities. Moreover, providing a bit more context on the Tanzanian-German history would have helped to understand better the context of exploitation and restitution and the myriad levels of inequality involved in this (ongoing) transnational history.

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<sup>131</sup> Shelton, “Critical,” 10.

<sup>132</sup> A starting point could be the publication *African Museums in the Making: Reflections on the Politics of Material and Public Culture in Zimbabwe*, ed. Henry Chiwaura, and Thomas Pan-ganayi Thondhlana, and Munyaradzi Mawere (Mankon, Bamenda: Langa RPCIG, 2015), DOI: [doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh9vwmh](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh9vwmh) (last accessed 29 May 2019).

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**Part 3.**  
**Normative dimensions of inequality and solidarity**

# **Eurosceptic Dreams of Solidarity: Intensifying Transnational Populist Discourse During the European Parliamentary Elections**

*Jelmer Herms*

## **1 Introduction**

In many ways, the 2019 European Union parliamentary elections mark a turning point for Europe. These elections will undoubtedly have a plethora of consequences for how the European Union and the European continent will develop over the coming period, the more because visions of how that future unfolds are increasingly contested.

The most explicit contestations of mainstream European visions of integration have been coming from populist Eurosceptic parties that became significantly more influential in the aftermath of the Eurocrisis and the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Assessing their impact on the European democratic process requires a thorough understanding of these groups, yet in contemporary European-level political discourse, terms such as populism have oftentimes become conflated with associated terms such as right-wing nationalism or Euroscepticism.

These concepts, however, do not have as much of an automatic relationship as is sometimes assumed, to the detriment of academic research on populism. As pointed out by Benjamin Moffitt, much contemporary research is focused on the national dimension of populism and often assumes that the relationship between populism and nationalism is entirely automatic, even though this is not

necessarily the case.<sup>1</sup> This is of course not to say that populism and nationalism do not have a rich and well-documented shared history, considering the current surge in popularity of right-wing nationalist populist parties all over Europe. To illustrate, consider only briefly the German AfD, the Dutch PVV and FvD, the Italian Lega, the British UKIP, The Flemish Vlaams Belang, the French Rassemblement National, or the Fidesz-KDNP alliance in Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

Despite many of these groups' differences, they can and do work together on a European scale, and the potential impact of their increased cooperation should not be understated. Considering this, it becomes all the more important to attempt to clarify the academic terminology surrounding populism and nationalism, for in the context of the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, the emphasis seems to be shifting away from nationalist populist discourse to a more transnational variant, and this development might be left unnoticed otherwise. Moffitt predicted in 2017 that transnational narratives would come to affect contemporary populist discourses, and this paper will address whether this prediction has come to pass.

In an attempt to incorporate the “intermediary processes of communication”<sup>3</sup> oftentimes left undiscussed in contemporary research on populism, this paper aims to set out a model by which to do a discursive analysis of several recent interactions between European populists. These cases can best be referred to as points of convergence, as instances in which nationalist populists from two or more national contexts meet as political actors to discuss a shared European identity. This analysis will be contextualized through a critical discussion of academic terms such as Euroscepticism, national populism, and European solidarity, and will continue by setting out a model through which the cases in this paper can be understood. The main question the paper aims to answer is as follows: *To which extent can it be established that there a rise in prevalence of transnational discourses concerning European identity within nationally bound or internationally bound populist parties*, as Benjamin Moffit predicted, in the context of the 2019 European Parliamentary elections?

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Moffitt, “Transnational Populism? Representative Claims, Media and the Difficulty of Constructing a Transnational People,” *Javnost - The Public* 24, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 409.

<sup>2</sup> This is not an exhaustive list, but by most common definitions, these political parties are the ones that express nationalist populist sentiments. For more background information, see also sources later mentioned in this paper, or for more a cursory reading, see:

“Europe and Right-wing Nationalism: A Country-by-country Guide,” *BBC News*, May 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Galpinand and Hans-Jörg Trenz, “The Spiral of Euroscepticism: Media Negativity, Framing and Opposition to the EU,” in *Euroscepticism, Democracy and the Media*, ed. Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 49.

## 2 Euro-scepticism and Populism in Europe

### 2.1 Euro-scepticism and Populism in Europe

Firstly, some key concepts often connected to populism in popular discourse and scholarly works require additional discussion. The first of these terms, Euro-scepticism, has been defined by scholars such as Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra, Catherine E. De Vries, and Charlotte Galpin and Hans-Jörg Trenz.<sup>4</sup> From their works, it can be generalized that Euro-scepticism consists primarily of an oppositional character to the processes of European integration.<sup>5</sup> This opposition to integration can take many forms, which complicates a comprehensive qualitative analysis.

Galpin and Trenz claim that research on Euro-scepticism has focused primarily on either analysing the mobilizing effect of political claims by parties, or the degree to which European citizens are ready to support or oppose European integration, thereby largely overlooking the intermediary processes of communication, interpretation and framing through which knowledge and attitudes are shaped by political agency.<sup>6</sup> Included in these intermediary processes of communication is, most importantly for this paper, the lack of coverage of newspapers and the European news cycle.

Furthermore, de Vries points out in a fashion similar to Galpin and Trenz that current analyses of Euro-scepticism have given rise to “empirical puzzles” that defy conventional analysis.<sup>7</sup> De Vries points out that our understanding of EU public opinion, which includes Euro-sceptic sentiment, relies on two assumptions about how the EU is perceived by citizens, the first of which is an economic “utilitarian” argument, where support for the EU is positively tied to economic development and prosperity<sup>8</sup>. In other words, this would mean support for the European Union and its institutions would increase during an economic upturn, and decline during an economic downturn.

The second assumption is the belief that Euro-sceptic sentiments are to no small part motivated by a concept of national identity that is exclusive to other territorial identities<sup>9</sup>. In this interpretation, those with more transnational or

<sup>4</sup> Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra, “Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe: An Introduction,” in *Euro-scepticism, Democracy and the Media*, ed. Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2; Catherine E. De Vries, “What is the Matter with Europe?,” in *Euro-scepticism and the Future of European Integration*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 15;

Galpin and Trenz, “The Spiral of Euro-scepticism,” in *Euro-scepticism, Democracy and the Media*, ed. Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 49.

<sup>5</sup> Caiani and Guerra, *Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Galpin and Trenz, *The Spiral of Euro-scepticism*, 49.

<sup>7</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 14.

<sup>8</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 14.

multi-layered identities would be less inclined to be Eurosceptic than those with a primarily nation-bound identity.<sup>10</sup> As de Vries points out, however, analyses based on these two assumptions fail to account for the Brexit vote outcome, or the large increase in the number of Eurosceptic parties in the context of the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. This begs the question whether Euroscepticism is being investigated comprehensively enough for scholars to come to complete conclusions with regards to the 2019 European Parliamentary elections.<sup>11</sup>

Another common distinction made by scholars is between a soft and a hard Euroscepticism.<sup>12</sup> Soft Euroscepticism can be best defined as a consensus with the core values of the EU as they are currently formulated with the inclusion of a sceptical attitude towards specific elements or policies resulting from those core values. An example of a soft Eurosceptic position include would be the ECR (European Conservatives and Reformists Group), who in their constituent declaration outline overlapping points with the current EU agenda, such as free enterprise and trade, sustainable clean energy, and respect and equitable treatment for all EU countries, but also reformist positions such as a commitment to greater transparency and less bureaucracy, effectively controlled immigration, and opposition to EU federalism.<sup>13</sup> A group in a similar position on the left side of the political spectrum would be the GUE/NGL (European United Left-Nordic Green Left), who oppose among others the current “market-oriented logic of competition”, the lack of commitment to climate change measures, and the lack of transparency in EU institutions.<sup>14</sup>

However, when thinking of Euroscepticism, the hard Eurosceptics and their more radical anti-EU claims most likely come to mind before the soft Eurosceptics. These hard Eurosceptics demand a total overhaul, if not a complete dissolution, of the European Union system. In those cases, there exists a principled objection to the foundational tenets of the European Union, most often expressed through anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalist, and anti-establishment

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<sup>10</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine E. De Vries, “Going Hard or Soft?: Party Choice among Supporters and Sceptics,” in *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2; Kocijan and Marko Kukec, “From Hard Consensus to Soft Euroscepticism: Attitudes of Croatian MPs on EU Integration,” *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 41, no. 4 (158) (January 2016): 39.

<sup>13</sup> “Our Vision for Europe: An Overview of Our Policies Aiming for Euro-realist Reform of the European Union,” European Conservatives and Reformists Group.

[https://ecrgroup.eu/vision\\_for\\_europe](https://ecrgroup.eu/vision_for_europe).

<sup>14</sup> “2019 – Another Europe is Possible,” European United Left/Nordic Green Left. <https://www.guengl.eu/european-parliament-election-2019/>.



viewpoints.<sup>15</sup> Examples of such European-level parties include the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) and the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). The recently formed European Alliance of People and Nations (EAPN) is expected to be similarly Euro-sceptic. In the case of the former two, their policy views are reactionary and to no small extent nostalgic.<sup>16</sup> They aim to return to a pre-European Union Europe wherein the nation-state is the un-changeable, central unit that has full sovereignty.

This reactionary tendency is what has led to the strong tie between hard Euro-scepticism and nationalism. Benjamin de Cleen, in this respect, defines nationalism as:

A discourse structured around the nodal point nation, envisaged as a limited and sovereign community that exists through time and is tied to a certain space, and that is constructed through an in/out (member/non-member) opposition between the nation and its outgroups. [...] In nationalism, other signifiers such as state, land, freedom, democracy, and culture acquire meaning in relation to the signifier nation.<sup>17</sup>

Historically, both these soft and hard forms of Euro-scepticism have played a marginal role in the history of European integration, oft overshadowed by the Europhoria of the late 20th century with the enlargement rounds, the introduction of the Single Market, and the Euro. Yet, despite this marginal role, the importance and prevalence of Euro-scepticism should not be underestimated, or seen as a temporary phenomenon. As claimed by Caiani and Guerra, Euro-scepticism and Euro-sceptic nationalism have come to be “a distinctive characteristic of the EU integration process”<sup>18</sup>, an “active opposition that links public opinion, civil society and political action, with a narrative on the EU that remains encapsulated within a negative articulation”<sup>19</sup>.

Euro-scepticism in both its hard form and its soft form, regardless of the radical statements by some Euro-sceptics, is therefore best constructed as a signal, a valuable and legitimate oppositional impulse that counterbalances narratives of European integration by giving a voice to the many sceptical and nationalistic

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<sup>15</sup> Look, for examples, to the aforementioned nationalist parties. Although it should not be automatically assumed, hard Euro-scepticism often goes hand-in-hand with nationalist views when looking at these examples.

<sup>16</sup> It should be pointed out that this nostalgia does not necessarily have to tie in to any one political or historical reality. The oftentimes brutal and complicated history of European nations is romanticised or ignored whenever it does not fit with the narrative of an essentially and centrally sovereign national identity.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin De Cleen, “Populism and Nationalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook Populism*, ed. Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul A. Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo and Pierre Ostiguy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Caiani and Guerra, *Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Caiani and Guerra, *Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe*, 3.

parties that, for better or for worse, form a significant part of the European demos. The value of this oppositional narrative should not be understated by conflating it with the political practices that have at times resulted from it, such as populism, of which the negative connotations on European political discourse are very much a popular topic of political-scientific enquiry.

## 2.2 Nationalist Populism

Populism, however, is a problematic scholarly term in itself, perhaps one of the most difficult to define concepts of the contemporary political moment. Jan Zeemann refers to populism as: “Any sustained, large-scale political project that mobilizes ordinarily marginalized social sectors into publicly visible and contentious political action, while articulating an anti-elite, nationalist rhetoric that valorises ordinary people”.<sup>20</sup> There are two problematic aspects to this definition, however, which are the words ‘large-scale’ and ‘publicly visible’. On a European stage, with over 400 million eyes, it is hard to set a threshold for large-scale or visible. It is hard to consider something ‘publicly visible’ if there are large language gaps and political-cultural differences between the 28 Member State countries of the European Union.

Moffitt avoids these complicated discussions by defining populism as “a political style that features an appeal to ‘the people’ versus ‘the elite’, ‘bad manners’, and the performance of crisis, breakdown, or threat”.<sup>21</sup> This more generally useable term allows for a broader usage outside of the national dimension, and shall therefore be adopted for the context of this paper.

With the end of the Eurocrisis and the 2015 Refugee Crisis, the populist approach to political discourse has become a hallmark of national and European political discussion.<sup>22</sup> Nationalist parties in many Member State contexts have garnered tremendous support from the national electorates. Take, for example, AfD, PVV, the Estonian Independence Party, the Finns Party, or Rassemble-

<sup>20</sup> Jan Zeemann, “Populism Beyond the Nation,” in *Populism and World Politics*, ed. Frank A. Stengel, David B. MacDonald and Dirk Nabers (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 30.

Importantly, it must be pointed out here that I consider his reference to nationalist rhetoric as being essential to the definition of populism to be incorrect. Populism can exist on both a regional as well as an international or transnational scale. Of course, for nationalist populism, this characteristic can only be considered essential.

<sup>21</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 410. It must be noted that De Cleen adopts a definition very similar to that of Moffitt, and that he bases his views on Moffitt’s.

<sup>22</sup> Katinka Barysch, “Is the Euro Crisis Responsible for Populism?” Centre for European Reform, last modified April 19, 2013. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/euro-crisis-responsible-populism>; Michał Krzyżanowski, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ruth Wodak, “The Mediatization and the Politicization of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Europe,” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, no. 16 (1-2) (2018): 2.

ment National. All these nationalist populist parties combined make up 18% of the European demos in a study recently published in *The Guardian*<sup>23</sup>.

These parties and the citizens they represent, although large in number, still constitute only a minority, and are generally not included in mainstream conceptions of the European Union. Their opposition is becoming more powerful, however, as de Vries points out the difference between the Five Presidents' Report of 2015 written by Jean-Claude Juncker, Donald Tusk, Mario Draghi, Martin Schulz and Jeroen Dijsselbloem, in which they "laid out ambitious plans about how to deepen the economic, monetary, and political integration of Europe for the decade to come" while at the same time, "Euroseptic parties in the 2014 European Parliament elections showed their strongest electoral gains ever", and "in Great Britain[, the vote] on EU membership in 2016 demonstrated the constraining effects of growing Euroseptic sentiment"<sup>24</sup>. In the context of 2014, these attempts to deepen integration contrast strongly with views held by increasingly large sections of the European demos, and this development seemingly continues in the 2019 Parliamentary elections<sup>25</sup>.

What this shows more than anything, is that there is a rapidly crystallizing division between what many view as 'those technocrats of Brussels, with their tinkering and undemocratic solutions to arcane problems' and the people of Europe that suffer under their 'complex and inefficient bureaucracy', regardless of how true these claims may be in political practice<sup>26</sup>. This development has caused some amount of tension and unrest in various European Member states, leaving many to wonder about the stability of Europe as a continent, and this anxiety is reflected particularly strongly in the scholarship on European solidarity.

### 3 The 'Breakdown' of European Solidarity

A question of much interest to academics has arisen from this rise of Euroseptic nationalist populism, which is whether European solidarity is impacted in a

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Lewis, Seán Clarke, Caelainn Barr, Josh Holder, and Niko Kommenda. "Revealed: One in Four Europeans Vote Populist," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/revealed-one-in-four-europeans-vote-populist>.

<sup>24</sup> De Vries, *What is the Matter with Europe*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis et al., *One in Four Europeans Vote Populist*.

<sup>26</sup> Rankin, Jennifer, "Is the EU Undemocratic?," *The Guardian*, June 13, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/13/is-the-eu-undemocratic-referendum-reality-check>; Katie Mansfield, "Ridiculous EU Branded Undemocratic as it Introduces More Pointless Bureaucracy" *Express*, December 14, 2016, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/743332/european-union-undemocratic-bureaucracy-rules-of-procedure-vote>.

negative way by the rise of such movements.<sup>27</sup> This is no surprise, considering the fact that issues of solidarity are also a central theme in the 2019 Parliamentary elections for both pro-integration and contra-integration parties. However, similarly to populism, solidarity is one of the most elusive terms in political science. Christian Lahusen and Maria Grasso point out that there is little empirical evidence on proving or disproving the presence of a European solidarity, despite an intensive public debate with many contentious issues.<sup>28</sup> By their definition, solidarity is “the preparedness to share one’s own resources with others, be that directly by donating money or time in support of others or indirectly by supporting the state to reallocate and redistribute some of the funds gathered through taxes or contributions”.<sup>29</sup> They believe the interpersonal, social solidarity groups organized in informal groups or networks are the most significant indicators for the presence of solidarity, together with the presence of support for the welfare state (or redistributive policies).<sup>30</sup>

This definition of solidarity applies quite well to what the European Parliament aims to install with its campaign, with initiatives such as #this-timeimvoting. The campaign material strongly emphasizes individual stories or shared histories from a transnational perspective, such as students working to make changes on a transnational scale.<sup>31</sup> The pro-EU-integration narrative is one of inclusivity, one in which the emphasis is laid on an essential solidarity

<sup>27</sup> Examples of discussions on European solidarity, the role of populism, and Euroscepticism include:

Christian Lahusen and Maria Grasso, “Solidarity in Europe: A Comparative Assessment and Discussion,” in *Solidarity in Europe: Citizens’ Responses in Times of Crisis*, ed. Christian Lahusen and Maria T. Grasso (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 253-277; Christian Lahusen and Maria Grasso, “Solidarity in Europe – European Solidarity: An Introduction,” in *Solidarity in Europe: Citizens’ Responses in Times of Crisis*, ed. Christian Lahusen and Maria T. Grasso (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 2; Tom Montgomery, Simone Baglioni, Olga Biosca, and Maria Grasso, “Pulling Together or Pulling Apart? Solidarity in the Post-Crisis UK,” in *Solidarity in Europe: Citizens’ Responses in Times of Crisis*, ed. Christian Lahusen and Maria T. Grasso (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 74; Magdalena Nowicka, Łukasz Krzyżowski, and Dennis Ohm, “Transnational Solidarity, the Refugees and Open Societies in Europe,” *Current Sociology* 67, no. 3 (May 2019): 284;

Wolfgang Schmale, “European Solidarity: A Semantic History,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 24, no. 6 (November 2, 2017): 854-873; Birte Siim, Aino Saarinen, and Anna Krasteva, “Citizens’ Activism and Solidarity Movements in Contemporary Europe: Contending with Populism,” in *Citizens’ Activism and Solidarity Movements*, ed. Birte Siim, Anna Krasteva, and Aino Saarinen (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 1; Steinar Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Core, 2005), 93-164.

<sup>28</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “European Solidarity: An Introduction,” 2.

<sup>29</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “European Solidarity: An Introduction,” 4.

<sup>30</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “European Solidarity: An Introduction,” 5.

<sup>31</sup> For example, campaign material can be accessed digitally through: “European Election Campaign Materials,” European Parliament Liaison Office to the United Kingdom. Accessed May 28, 2019, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/european-elections/european\\_elections/materials-form.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/european-elections/european_elections/materials-form.html)

This also makes reference to “What Does Europe Do for Me?” European Parliament. Accessed May 28, 2019, <https://www.what-europe-does-for-me.eu/en/portal>

that must be, a solidarity derived from the TEU and EU institutions.<sup>32</sup> It appeals to an interpersonal solidarity between European citizens on the basis of mutual acceptance and an inclusive vision of the future in which the rights of all humans are guaranteed on a European level. This is expressed through this strong sense of solidarity facilitated by European institutions, such as the EU Solidarity Fund or the European Solidarity Corps<sup>33</sup>.

The matrix for this transnational network is of course the European Union and its organizations, such as the ones previously mentioned, the Parliament and the Commission for political solidarity, the European Space Agency for a more scientific solidarity, and so on. The end ideological goal is for the European Union to be an embodiment of solidarity and inclusivity, a network that is willing to share resources such as knowledge, funding, time, and manpower to accomplish a set of transnational or European goals. In the terms of Lahusen and Grasso, it is “the group-boundedness and reciprocity of solidarity” between members of imagined communities of various kinds that is important, from “informal cliques” such as friends and family across borders, to “full-fledged nation-states” cooperating with each other. They are all a part of this European solidarity, either formally or informally organized.<sup>34</sup>

Alluring as this campaign may be to many Europeans with vested transnational interests, or those with a broader interest in Europe, there are glaring issues with this approach that tend to be capitalized upon in the counternarrative of the Euro-sceptic populists. In some sense, conflating the EU with solidarity itself has been one of the most successful aspects of the EU’s campaign, since even scholars have come to see the increase in Euro-sceptic populism as a causative event with a decrease in European solidarity.<sup>35</sup> In other words, there are some academics out there who look at the rise of Euro-sceptic populism and see it as ‘filling a breach’ left by the departure of a European solidarity. This is, however, very difficult to ascertain beyond reasonable doubt.

First of all, Lahusen and Grasso point out that this kind institutional European solidarity is already (and has historically been) a very low priority for

<sup>32</sup> “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union,” EUR-Lex, Official Journal of the European Union. C115/15., May 2008,

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0013:0045:EN:PDF>;  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73335-7\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73335-7_4).

<sup>33</sup> “EU Solidarity Fund: Commission proposes €293,5 million for Austria, Italy, and Romania and evaluates the Fund, Europa Nu,” May 15, 2019.

[https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vkyiib4morz7/nieuws/eu\\_solidarity\\_fund\\_commission\\_proposes?ctx=vgaclcr1jzljz&tab=0](https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vkyiib4morz7/nieuws/eu_solidarity_fund_commission_proposes?ctx=vgaclcr1jzljz&tab=0)

[Overview of Solidarity Projects of the European Solidarity Corps], Accessed May 28, 2019.  
<http://www.europeansolidarity.ie/>.

<sup>34</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “European Solidarity: An Introduction,” 5.

<sup>35</sup> Siim, Saarinen, and Krasteva, “Citizens’ Activism and Solidarity,” 4.

Nowicka, Krzyzowski, and Ohm, “Transnational Solidarity and Open Societies,” 384.

many EU citizens. They claim that “feelings of attachment and identification with Europe and the European Union are less developed than those to one’s own country”, and that solidarity with regional identities or national identities, or in more general terms, those in our “proximity”, will continue to take precedence over a solidarity targeting other EU countries.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, they add that the rising Euroscepticism will generally mean less support for redistribution policies between states and citizens<sup>37</sup>, which would lead to a decline in European solidarity among citizens. However, part of this problem with defining solidarity in this way is maintaining a very narrow definition of the term. This definition of solidarity implies that European solidarity can only be expressed through support of specifically pro-European integration policies, through aiding “European citizens” in a very abstract sense, or by expressing support for European Union institutions.

The terms that should be very clearly distinguished to that end are European solidarity and European Union solidarity. Eurosceptics and populists do not express as much solidarity on a European level with European institutions, but they do express other forms of solidarity, most notably amongst themselves in the case of populists. Solidarity does not have to be sanctioned by European institutions for it to occur, as acts of solidarity can occur on an interpersonal level or in more informal settings. The obvious complication is that this is very hard to measure, but that should not be an argument for denying the existence or the importance of interpersonal solidarities on a European scale. In fact, these more discourse-driven solidarities are more prevalent among Eurosceptic populists, as they are adept at construing narratives of solidarity in which norms of deservingness, civic rights and obligations, and shared political viewpoints are effectively united into an emotionally appealing ideological position that handily exploits the apparent contradictions in the pro-integrationist philosophy.

They identify not only how one is deserving of solidarity but also how someone is not, for example by excluding specific demographics, often ethnic minorities and illegal immigrants.<sup>38</sup> In the case of nationalist populists, solidarity has historically been interpersonal, regional and national. Just because they defy international and transnational solidarities as defined by the European integrationists, it should not be said that Europe is devoid of European solidarity because it is channelled through the lens of the “nodal point nation”.<sup>39</sup> In other words, a lack of support for the European Union and its institutions should not be seen as proof for the absence of European solidarity.

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<sup>36</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “Solidarity in Europe: A Comparative Assessment,” 276.

<sup>37</sup> Lahusen and Grasso, “Solidarity in Europe: A Comparative Assessment,” 276.

<sup>38</sup> Which would, of course be those who they consider to be non-European, or not part of their nation.

<sup>39</sup> Zeemann, *Populism Beyond the Nation*, 3.

To claim, then, that there is a vacuum or a decline in European solidarity practices becomes very difficult. If you broaden the definition to include not only those EU-institutionally ‘sanctioned’ forms of solidarity, but also acts of solidarity between Euroseptic populists, the absolute relationship between Eurosepticism and declining solidarity becomes much more difficult to ascertain, leading me to believe that further research is required. Most importantly, it should be kept in mind that Eurosepticism is rising in the absence clear proof that European solidarity and solidarity practices are declining.

#### 4 Alternative Solidarities: Dreams of a Different Europe

In the case of Euroseptic populist parties, notions of solidarity and group identity exist, if only as part of a more exclusive in-group. On a European political level, there have been partnerships between Euroseptic populists who have no real connection to each other when it comes to policy views.<sup>40</sup> In fact, much of their organization is the forced result of the European Parliamentary rule that a party needs to consist of people from multiple national backgrounds.<sup>41</sup> As pointed out by De Cleen, this brand of cooperation “is perhaps best labelled international rather than transnational populism: It is more about the international ties between nationally organised populisms (that revolve around nationally defined people-as-underdogs) than about a truly trans-national politics across national contexts”.<sup>42</sup> Even in scholarly inquiry this distinction has not always been clarified. As put forth by Zeemann:

Regarding the notion of a transnational or even global populism, books with titles like *The Promise and Perils of Populism: Global Perspectives*, *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession* or *The Global Rise of Populism. Performance, Political Style, and Representation* at first glance appear to have some kind of unified global populist movement as their subject matter. However, a closer look quickly reveals that most of the existing work examines cases in separate nation-states.<sup>43</sup>

Moffitt clarifies that the end goal of these organization is international cooperation and coordination, either internationally between national-level political parties such as the PVV and (in the context of 2014) Front National, or internationally between European-level political parties such as the EFDD and the

<sup>40</sup> Consider, for example, the fact that Lega Nord is a separatist movement in Italy that appeals to Northern regional identities, while parties like Front National and PVV are explicitly nationalistic and for a strong, unified nation. In Europe, they have worked together in the past.

<sup>41</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 411.

<sup>42</sup> De Cleen, *Populism and Nationalism*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Zeemann, *Populism Beyond the Nation*, 26

ENF.<sup>44</sup> These organizations will have, as he continues to point out, very little reason to continue existing in the theoretical case that their end goal of completely reforming the EU would succeed.<sup>45</sup> This is also what he sees as the key difference between an international populist and a transnational populist. Moffitt defines this difference as follows:

While ‘the people’ of transnational populism are necessarily spread beyond the borders of the nation-state, the same condition is not necessary for the enemy of the transnational ‘people’ – ‘the elite’. While the transnational ‘people’ spoken for under transnational populism might be opposed to a transnational, supra-national or international elite – all familiar targets of populists of both national and transnational character – they could equally be opposed to a specific national elite.<sup>46</sup>

In other words, transnational populism adheres to the same fundamental logic as with other kinds, in that there is a perceived dichotomy between an elite and a people. There are two key differences, however, the first of which is that transnational populists attempt to construct a transnational people against an elite that can be equally transnational, but does not have to be so by definition. The second key distinction is the associated challenges with constructing a transnational people. As Moffitt points out, transnational populists attempt to formalize the “complicated work” of setting a “people” across national borders against “the elite”.<sup>47</sup> In this discussion, these populist politicians function as the *vox populi*, the means by which the anger of the people is channelled into the political system.

The main question this paper set out to answer is to which extent it can be established that there is a rise in prevalence of transnational discourses concerning European identity within nationally bound or internationally bound populist parties, as Benjamin Moffitt predicted, in the context of the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. With these discussions and definitions of Euroscepticism, populism, nationalism transnational populism and in mind, there is a theoretical basis by which such an analysis can be conducted. However, to make the analysis more structural and to allow for easier cross-comparison between cases, I set out to establish a series of criteria for identifying transnational populist discourse, which takes the form of a rudimentary model. All of the following six criteria need to be present in any analysed case for it to be considered part of a transnational populist development:

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<sup>44</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 410.

<sup>45</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 410.

<sup>46</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 410.

<sup>47</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 421.



1. An established hostile dichotomy between the vox populi and the European people and a(n) (inter/trans) national status quo.
2. The vox populi must necessarily be constructed as representative of a non-nationally defined European people engaged in some form of political movement.
3. There must be elements of a "call to action" to the European people in selected movement to overthrow the (inter/trans) national status quo.
4. A clear geographical dispersion that crosses national boundaries (meaning: cannot involve one national context).
5. For a shift in discourse to occur, involved political groups in transnational discourse must have a history of expressing nationalist populist sentiments.
6. There must be an existing solidarity based on a shared set of political beliefs or values.

## 5 Methodology

Considering the explorative and to no small extent experimental nature of this paper as well as the recentness of this phenomenon, there are several methodological concerns that need to be addressed before moving forward. At this point in time, there is still very little data and theory available that would allow for a comprehensive quantitative analysis of transnational populism as a phenomenon. While it falls outside the scope of this paper to conduct such analysis regardless, it should nonetheless be pointed out that there is significant room for further research and exploration of this field. The qualitative analysis I am conducting has, as a result of this relative theoretical dearth, obvious limitations in terms of representativeness and generalizability.

As mentioned earlier, my cases should be understood as points of convergence, as instances in which nationalist populists from two or more national contexts meet as political actors. The discourse during these moments of convergence are the central units of analysis. More than anything, the discourse analysis through which this paper addresses its research question is meant to show by which criteria transnational populism can be analysed, what such an analysis could look like, and where the borders of the phenomenon could lie as compared to more established definitions of populism. Although my cases cannot be considered representative of the field of European politics, the recentness and geographical variation displayed in my cases serve as a clear signal to populism scholars that transnational populism is not contained to any one set of national borders (which would of course also be a *contradictio in terminis*) and that it is a recent development requiring further academic discussion.

The search for points of convergence was conducted by searching major news outlet archives using a keyword search. Various news outlets were consulted, all of which can be found in the footnotes and bibliography. My case selection as such is further constrained by the following set of criteria:

1. Contains explicit reference to European-level political issues: More specifically, this refers to agriculture, immigration, cultural identities and values, social policy, and discrimination.
2. Contains political figures with a history of European institution-level cooperation.
3. Statement was made in 2018 or later, and before the election results of 2019 European Parliamentary elections.
4. Chosen case needs to be English and available online, while supplementary materials need to be available in Dutch, English, French or German.

Keywords consisted of: “European Union”, “Future of Europe”, “Solidarity”, “Populism”, and “Cooperation”. This was followed by filtering for specific political parties that are known for employing populist rhetoric, such as the PVV, Lega, FvD, AfD, and on a European level, the EAPN and the ENF. From this, a selection was made based on the availability of supplementary sources comprehensible to me, while attempting to maintain sufficient diversity between different included nationalities. A secondary objective was to find examples that were as recent as possible, to ensure maximum relevance to the topics of the European Parliamentary election of 2019.

With this and the previously mentioned limitations of this paper in mind, a selection of four points of convergence was made to keep the scope and scale of the paper feasible. Further research could include an expansion of the selection criteria, a greater variety of cases, and a further expansion of the model itself. In three of four cases, all six criteria of the model were met, while in one case, another iteration of populism was concluded upon. Common motifs, as was to be predicted from populists, are anti-immigration stances, fear of loss of ethnic-cultural identity, and a distrust towards and mocking of European-level authority and a higher level of trust and displayed solidarity with other populist groups.

## 6 The Transnational Solidarities of Europe: Points of Convergence

### 6.1 Václav Klaus and the Dutch Forum voor Democratie

Václav Klaus, an economist and former Czech president, is famous for his Euro-scepticism.<sup>48</sup> He opposed the European Constitution, as well as the Treaty of Lisbon. Although he does not see European cooperation and integration on the economic front as inherently problematic, he has compared the European Union to the authoritarian, oppressive regime of the USSR. On May 6, 2019, he was invited to the Renaissance Institute<sup>49</sup> in the Netherlands for a lecture by right-wing populist Euro-sceptic party Forum voor Democratie (FvD), during which he outlined two reasons in particular for being Euro-sceptic, which is both the issue of climate change 'craziness' and illegal immigration. FvD's own webpage comments on this lecture outline how 'open-borders-ideology' is an oppressive, dangerous trend imposed on 'unwilling' European citizens.<sup>50</sup> They also imply that mainstream discourse on climate change has been hijacked by an implied left-wing ideology that pushes climate change issues as a 'religion' upon all EU citizens.<sup>51</sup>

This example meets all the six criteria required for transnational populism. This lecture (1) involves more than one nationality and crosses national borders (2), constructs a distinctly European people, (3) implies a 'call to action' to democratically overthrow the status quo, (4) distinguishes between an intellectual,

<sup>48</sup> Jan Kovář, "Euro-scepticism is on the Rise in the Czech Republic," *Emerging Europe*, February 21, 2018. <https://emerging-europe.com/voices/euro-scepticism-rise-czech-republic/>

<sup>49</sup> "Renaissancelezing: Václav Klaus – Is there a chance for a European Renaissance?" Renaissance Instituut, filmed May 16, 2019, video, 1:17:48, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3TYUU8CBF4> It should be noted that the Renaissance Instituut is the scientific department of the Forum voor Democratie party, and they are explicitly responsible for analysing and diagnosing the problems associated with the Forum voor Democratie platform. They can therefore be reasonably considered an extension of the political party. See also: Martin Sommer and Max Pam, "Jullie Hebben Geen Ervaring Met Onderdrukking, Dat Maakt Jullie Naïef in Het Beoordelen van de EU," *De Volkskrant*, May 6, 2019. [https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/jullie-hebben-geen-ervaring-met-onderdrukking-dat-maakt-jullie-naïef-in-het-beoordelen-van-de-eu~b5d62fa7/?utm\\_campaign=shared\\_owned&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&fbclid=IwAR2IXSU6eAYqkLWd7OxZQphJxssjFT-C69qCunNa2WbNia4O3qzzU3KYK2U](https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/jullie-hebben-geen-ervaring-met-onderdrukking-dat-maakt-jullie-naïef-in-het-beoordelen-van-de-eu~b5d62fa7/?utm_campaign=shared_owned&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&fbclid=IwAR2IXSU6eAYqkLWd7OxZQphJxssjFT-C69qCunNa2WbNia4O3qzzU3KYK2U).

<sup>50</sup> Paul Cliteur, "Václav Klaus Doorziet de klimaat -en immigratierelgies van Europa," Forum Voor Democratie – Nieuws, last modified May 10, 2020, <https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/vclav-klaus-doorziet-de-klimaat-en-immigratierelgies-van-europa>.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Cliteur, "Václav Klaus Doorziet de klimaat -en immigratierelgies van Europa," Forum Voor Democratie – Nieuws, May 10, 2020, <https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/vclav-klaus-doorziet-de-klimaat-en-immigratierelgies-van-europa>.

European elite and a distinctly European vox populi, (5) explicitly involves nationalistic political groups, movements, and political histories in cooperation with one another and finally, (6) the organization of a lecture, which involves these groups investing resources and time, is a reciprocal expression of shared political viewpoints, meaning that it should be constructed as an act of transnational solidarity. Moreover, Klaus stresses the importance of transnational cooperation to address these issues during this speech. He rejects the European Union, but not the principles of cooperation that underline it. This, therefore, can be considered engaging in transnationalist populist discourse.

## 6.2 Vlaams Belang, Steve Bannon, and Marine Le Pen

On December 8, 2018, Vlaams Belang, a famously right-wing Eurosceptic populist party, hosted Breitbart (an American online newspaper with explicit ties to the alt-right)<sup>52</sup> founder Steve Bannon and nationalist populist and Eurosceptic Marine Le Pen in the Flemish parliament. The key topic of the meeting was the UN Migration Pact and its destabilizing effect on the Belgian parliamentary coalition. Through this meeting, Vlaams Belang hoped to “show voters that [it] is able to have relations with other countries, such as the United States, France, or Hungary”.<sup>53</sup> Euractiv reports that Le Pen believed signing the pact would constitute a deal “with the devil”<sup>54</sup>. This example in particular begs room for further investigation into the transatlantic influence of Steve Bannon and his emerging “The Movement”, yet this lies outside of the scope of this current research paper. It should be said that the explicit goal of Bannon is to unite political agents across national borders into one cohesive European movement.

Regardless, this meeting should be described as a transnational populist one. Firstly, (1) it involves more than one nationality and crosses national as well as continental borders, (2) constructs a distinctly European people by calling the UN Migration Pact “suicidal” for not one country, but for all of Europe and its peoples, (3) implies a ‘call to action’ to democratically overthrow this status quo in the 2019 Elections, (4) distinguishes between Brussels political elite and a European people suffering under it, (5) explicitly involves nationalistic politi-

<sup>52</sup> Janine Jackson, “Rebranding Trump’s White Supremacist Strategist,” *Fair*, January 1, 2017. <https://fair.org/home/rebranding-trumps-white-supremacist-strategist/>.

<sup>53</sup> Georgi Gotev, “Vlaams Belang hosts Steve Bannon, Marine Le Pen in Flemish Parliament,” EURACTIV.com, December 10, 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/vlaams-belang-hosts-steve-bannon-marine-le-pen-in-flemish-parliament/>.

<sup>54</sup> Georgi Gotev, “Vlaams Belang hosts Steve Bannon, Marine Le Pen in Flemish Parliament,” EURACTIV.com, December 10, 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/vlaams-belang-hosts-steve-bannon-marine-le-pen-in-flemish-parliament/>.

cal groups, movements, and political histories, and finally, (6) the organization of such a political gathering around one political document, and the stated intent at future cooperation and the sharing of resources, implies the presence of a transnational, European, act of solidarity. This therefore constructs a distinctly transnationalist populist discourse.

### 6.3 Geert Wilders and Viktor Orbán Meeting

As one of the original right-wing Euro-sceptic populists in Europe, Geert Wilders went to meet with one of his “heroes”, Viktor Orbán, in January 2019.<sup>55</sup> He went there to promote his book, *Marked for Death*, in which he outlines a biographical account of his struggle against the “Islamic threat”, and the mainstream political establishment that has at more than one time publicly denounced him.<sup>56</sup> In this meeting, he praises Orbán for his resistance to EU interference, his stance against Islam and immigration, and his preservation of Hungarian culture. Orbán discusses the idea of an “alliance of free nations”<sup>57</sup> in his meeting with the Visegrad-countries. While the meeting is geographically and thematically transnational, Orbán refers to a nation-bound Europe and not a singular people of Europe.

In terms of adhering to the criteria set out in this paper, this meeting (1) does establish a hostile dichotomy between a *vox populi*, and an elite, however (2/) this elite is not constructed as the representative of a non-nationally defined European people. Furthermore, although there is (3) a call to action for overthrowing the status quo implied in his Orbán's call for an alliance of free nations, a (4) clear geographical dispersion, and (5) a rich history of nationalistic populist discourse, the relationship between Wilders and Orbán is not based on a sharing of resources or time, and without an investment of resources of any kind, it cannot be said that this meeting is an act of solidarity. This meeting, therefore, should not be used as an example of transnational populism, but of international populism: Individual political actors working together to accomplish separate but similar aims.

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<sup>55</sup> Elif Isitman, “Wilders Ontmoet ‘held’ Orbán: Hij is een voorbeeld voor EU-beleiders,” *Elsevier Weekblad*, January 29, 2018,

<https://www.elsevierweekblad.nl/nederland/achtergrond/2018/01/wilders-ontmoet-held-orban-in-boedapest-hij-is-voorbeeld-voor-eu-leiders-580498/>.

<sup>56</sup> Geert Wilders, “Boek Geert Wilders: *Marked for Death*,” *Partij voor de Vrijheid Nieuwsbrief*, January, 2012,

<https://www.bol.com/nl/f/marked-for-death/9200000002219763/>.

<sup>57</sup> Isitman, “Wilders Ontmoet ‘held’ Orbán.”

## 6.4 The European Alliance of Peoples and Nations

Famously Eurosceptic Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini announced on April 8, 2019 the formation of a new European right-wing alliance focused on carving out a Europe “of common sense”.<sup>58</sup> As claimed by Alexander Sarti, “the stated goal of the new group is to challenge the power of the governing bloc, with all parties involved favouring tighter immigration and border policies, and subscribing to varying levels of Euroscepticism in favour of greater national independence”.<sup>59</sup> He adds, importantly, that this group will most likely include most of the current ENF, and he projects 62 seats in the next EU parliament elections for the new bloc.<sup>60</sup> What can be seen here, is what de Cleen describes as an “exclusionary nationalist rejection of ethnic-cultural diversity”<sup>61</sup> inspired by a network of populist parties working together to overcome what they see as threatening future for the European continent. As read in an article by the Dutch *NRC*:

Resistance to illegal immigration is the binding element. Meuthen: ‘We have to build Fortress Europe’. Vistisen: ‘The illegal immigration is a symptom that safety in Europe is not being taken seriously.’<sup>62</sup>

They continue to observe that all present members want to “protect European identities, traditions, and culture”. Olli Kroto of the Finnish Party, explicitly

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<sup>58</sup> “European Nationalists Form Alliance for Elections,” BBC News, April 8, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47854288>.

Barry Colleen, “Eurosceptic, Populist Parties Form Alliance in Europe,” *Washington Pos*, April 8, 2019,

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/italys-salvini-forming-alliance-of-far-right-parties/2019/04/08/db2e9874-59d6-11e9-98d4-844088d135f2\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/italys-salvini-forming-alliance-of-far-right-parties/2019/04/08/db2e9874-59d6-11e9-98d4-844088d135f2_story.html);

Andrew Rettman, “Far-Right Launch EU Campaign at Milan Mini-Meeting,” *Euobserver*, April 8, 2019,

<https://euobserver.com/political/144607>;

Jason Horowitz, “Matteo Salvini Announces New European Alliance of Far-Right Populists,” *The New York Times*, April 9, 2019.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/08/world/europe/italy-salvini-far-right-alliance.html>;

Marc Leijendekker, “Matteo Salvini, Leider in de Strijd tegen het 'oude' Europa,” *NRC*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/04/08/matteo-salvini-leider-in-de-strijd-tegen-het-oude-europa-a3956132>.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander Sarti, “European Alliance of Peoples and Nations: What we know so far,” *Europe Elects*, April 8, 2019,

<https://europeelects.eu/2019/04/08/european-alliance-of-peoples-and-nations-what-we-know-so-far/>.

<sup>60</sup> Sarti, “EAPN: What we Know so Far.”

<sup>61</sup> De Cleen, *Populism and Nationalism*, 10.

<sup>62</sup> Leijendekker, *Salvini in Strijd tegen Europa*.

said: "The political Islam is destroying Europe. We are against multicultural ideology."<sup>63</sup>

The only defence against these threats is, according to Salvini from the Italian LEGA, their platform. As he says, "we want to reform the European Union and the European Parliament, without destroying them [...] We want to bring radical change".<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, Europe is being constructed by these parties as one family. As put forth by the FPÖ when joining the new EAPN: "We expand our community, the family. We work for a new European Dream. Today, the European Union represents a nightmare for many citizens and peoples, he sa[ys]. The alliance will put 'work, family, security, and environmental protection, the future of youth', back in the centre".<sup>65</sup>

The strongest of all previous examples, paradoxically, this 'Alliance of Peoples and Nations' does an excellent job of creating one European people. It passes all of the six established criteria, since it (1) establishes a hostile dichotomy between European families, European youth, and the European community and a transnational globalist elite that pushes illegal immigration and ignores the security of its people. Secondly, (2) the vox *populi* is constructing a non-national people, a European family sharing a single European dream, united under a single political banner. It also includes (3) a "call to action" from the vox *populi* to the people to overthrow the (inter/trans) national status quo that threatens their safety and their ethnic-cultural background. (4) Just from looking at the list of parties should the geographical dispersion (meaning: cannot involve one national context) of this movement become explicit. Furthermore, (5) the involved political groups in transnational discourse have a rich history of expressing nationalist populist tendencies, and this movement is staged to absorb the previously Euroseptic populist block, the ENF, into its ranks. Finally, it must be said that solidarity exists between the members of these groups, based on shared political and ideological viewpoints. They construct themselves discursively and politically as a family, a group that shares resources, ideas, and common goals with each other. This, therefore, can be considered a very strong example of transnational populist discourse.

## 7 Conclusion

In 2017, Benjamin Moffitt predicted that transnational populism, though rare at the time of writing his article, would become more prevalent in European discourse. And, as indicated by these four cases, European populists and the newly

<sup>63</sup> Leijendekker, *Salvini in Strijd tegen Europa*.

<sup>64</sup> BBC News, "European Nationalists Form Alliance for Elections."

<sup>65</sup> WELT, "EU-Parlament: FPÖ Will Europaweitem Bündnis Mit Salvini Und AfD Beitreten."

formed EAPN's narrative approaches are indeed shifting from reactionary nostalgia and nationalist populism to a more positively defined vision of Europe. The transnational approach previously exclusive to the European integrationists has begun to affect the populist narrative as well, as both national and international European populists have begun to appeal to a transnational, European demos to challenge the values and beliefs upon which the European Union was founded. Yet, contrary to what European integrationists tend to argue, it should not be assumed automatically that this means the end of European solidarity, or the end of European cooperation.

Solidarity is not reliant on political discourse or on European Union institutions to survive, as pointed out by the definitions of the concept in this paper, and it is undeniable that Eurosceptic sentiments have had the powerful effect of rallying large sections of the EU demos. Furthermore, European Union solidarity is not the same as European solidarity. It is not impossible that, even with the collapse of the current formations of populist parties, the European solidarities and co-operations that were fostered by them remain, and could be channelled into different forms that contribute positively to a more pervasive realization of European identity.

As argued previously, Euroscepticism can be a valuable and essential counter-narrative. Supporters of further European Union integration and scholars both still stand to learn from the ways in which Eurosceptics mobilize European citizens, which is in part what Moffitt argued in 2017 as well: "Analysts of populism would do well to consider how populists increasingly undertake this "complicated work" of setting a "people" across national borders against "the elite" by putting transnational populism under their analytical lens".<sup>66</sup> Future research opportunities on transnational populism will continue to emerge as academics, Eurosceptics and integrationists continue to attempt to negotiate and reconcile European identity with the current status quo of Europe. Regardless of the 2019 European Parliamentary election results, similarly to what Moffitt did in 2017, I would also predict that the way in which European discourse is conducted will continue to evolve in a more transnational direction, a direction in which new solidarities will inevitably emerge both outside and inside party political structures.

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<sup>66</sup> Moffitt, *Transnational Populism*, 409.



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# **The Visual Depiction of Refugees in Dutch Newspapers: Analyzing and Comparing Visuals in a Right-wing and Left-wing newspaper**

*Fleur Schellekens*

## **1 Introduction**

In 2015, thousands of refugees applied for asylum in the Netherlands. During the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis, the second half of 2015, close to 30.000 applications were filed by Syrian refugees.<sup>1</sup> While some people volunteered to help these refugees, other people voiced their concerns and were strongly against the arrival of these refugees. The root of these concerns (and attitudes towards refugees in general) might be in the way the media represented these refugees, since research has shown that media plays a crucial role in how unequal social relations are represented.<sup>2</sup> According to a Council of Europe Report from 2017, the “European press played a central role in framing refugees’ and migrants’ arrival to European shores in 2015 as a crisis for Europe”.<sup>3</sup> The audience constructs their ‘us’ identity based on all the representations of the other. This entails the media’s role could also be to support the cultural diversity. Given this,

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<sup>1</sup> “UNHCR Population Statistics - Data - Asylum Seekers Monthly,” accessed May 2, 2019, [http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum\\_seekers\\_monthly](http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum_seekers_monthly).

<sup>2</sup> Simon Cottle, ed., *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: Changing Cultural Boundaries*, Issues in Cultural and Media Studies (Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Myria Georgiou and Dr Rafal Zaborowski, “Council of Europe Report: Media Coverage of the ‘Refugee Crisis’: A Cross-European Perspective,” 2017, 24.

we can conclude that media has the power to support both inequality and solidarity, based on how they frame the news story.

A study has shown that the media depicts the refugees mostly as either threats or as victims.<sup>4</sup> This could again be related to respectively inequality and solidarity. In the context of this research, inequality is understood as putting an emphasis on differences between refugees and locals and thereby strengthening the concept and divide between ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Solidarity is understood as solidarity towards the refugees and thereby softening or even resolving the divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

This study will analyze and compare the depiction of immigrants in two national Dutch newspapers both with a different political orientation. It will focus on the depiction in visuals, including photographs, maps and graphs on the frontpages of the newspapers. Earlier research on this topic almost exclusively discussed the content of the article, while neglecting the impact of the visuals. Several studies have shown that visuals, maybe even more than words, play a major role in constructing meaning.<sup>5</sup> The front page of almost every newspaper is full of visuals. These visuals, together with the headlines, are the first things you notice and what you will focus on. It is thus problematic that earlier studies have left out the visuals in their analysis. This study will therefore focus on the visuals in newspapers.

This study will explore the relationship between the political choices of the newspapers’ audiences and the framing of the visuals being used. It will investigate whether the frames used in the visuals in *De Telegraaf*, with a mostly right-wing audience, will be more associated with values attributed to the ‘right’ such as tradition and inequality and whether the frames used in the visuals in *de Volkskrant*, with a mostly left-wing audience, will be more associated with concepts such as solidarity and social equality which are often attributed to the ‘left’.

The focus of this study is on Dutch newspapers, but the topic of migration receives attention all across Europe. The photos depicting refugees that we find in the newspapers, are photos that have been taken all over Europe. Even though the result itself will not be able to be translated to the situation in other countries, it emphasizes the influence that visuals can have on the framing of the refugees arrival.

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<sup>4</sup> Keith Greenwood and Tj Thomson, “Framing the Migration: A Study of News Photographs Showing People Fleeing War and Persecution,” *International Communication Gazette*, March 7, 2019, 174804851983351, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048519833515>; Srividya Ramasubramanian, “Framing the Syrian Refugee Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Arabic and English News Sources,” 2018, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Lulu Rodriguez and Daniela V Dimitrova, “The Levels of Visual Framing,” *Journal of Visual Literacy* 30, no. 1 (January 2011): 48–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23796529.2011.11674684>, 50.

In research, the terms migrant and refugee are sometimes used interchangeably. However, there is a clear distinction between the two. According to the definition used by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution.”<sup>6</sup> Migrants on the other hand “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution of death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.”<sup>7</sup> This study will specifically focus on refugees. The terms migrant and immigrant will only be used when referring to earlier studies that specifically used these terms.

This paper will first provide a theoretical framework, concerning the framing theory in a visual context. Second, it will discuss earlier visual framing research. After that, the method of the study will be described, followed by an analysis of the data. From the interpretation of the data, some conclusions will be drawn.

## 2 The framing theory in a visual context

Erving Goffman was one of the earliest and most important contributors to frame analysis.<sup>8</sup> His book *Frame Analysis*, published in 1974, is generally seen as the foundation of this research method. In this book he describes the way in which people use different kinds of framework to transfer and interpret messages. The political scientist Robert Entman was in 1993 the first academic to describe how these different frames function.<sup>9</sup> He identifies framing as a “way to describe the power of a communicating text”.<sup>10</sup> Through framing, the communicator makes certain items or pieces of information either more or less salient. The process of framing is the selection of these aspects in order to promote a certain idea or problem. The process of framing can not only be applied to texts, but also to visuals. A study by Rodriguez and Dimitrova indicates that images are powerful framing tools, maybe even more so than words.<sup>11</sup> The reasoning behind this is that images are easier and differently processed. They are processed peripherally,

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘Migrant’ – Which Is Right?,” UNHCR, accessed May 2, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>8</sup> Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974).

<sup>9</sup> Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): 51–58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>; Robert M. Entman, “Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents,” *Journal of Communication* 41, no. 4 (December 1, 1991): 6–27, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1991.tb02328.x>.

<sup>10</sup> Entman, “Framing,” 51.

<sup>11</sup> Rodriguez and Dimitrova, “The Levels of Visual Framing,” 50.

rather than centrally, and it appears that audiences are more prone to accept the visual frame than the textual frame.

Visual framing research and methods are far from having standardized ways of interpreting the data, but there are some features that multiple studies have in common. Rodriguez and Dimitrova have developed a model for analyzing visual frames based on earlier research. Their model contains several levels of framing, based on the layer of meaning they uncover.<sup>12</sup> The first level is the denotative level, in which the visual is described. It looks at the subjects and objects in the visual and the caption but does not search for a meaning behind these. The second level is stylistic framing, focused on the conventions and camera shot position being used for the framing. The distance and position of the camera reflects the imposed relationship between the audience and the subject of the photograph, ranging from intimate to distant. The third level is the connotative level. In this level, not only subjects and objects of the visuals are analyzed, but also the ideas or concepts attached to them and the relationship between the different signs. The fourth level is called the ideological attachment of visual framing. This level analyzes the ideas and power relations behind the subjects and objects in the visuals. It draws on the stylistic and symbolic features that have been identified in the other levels. In this level, the reason behind the visual is being studied. This study will apply this theoretical framework to conceptualize the visual frames being used. What most studies using visual framing also have in common is that they try to identify different themes being used in the visuals.<sup>13</sup> This study will identify the themes as a part of the model by Rodriguez and Dimitrova.

### 3 Visual framing research

There is a growing body of research on visual framing, which illustrates the framing power that has been attributed to visuals.<sup>14</sup> On the more specific topic of the visual depiction of refugees in the news, most of the research this far has been focused on the text in news articles, instead of press photographs and visuals. The few studies that do focus on visuals, have not examined whether there is a relationship between the political choices of the newspapers' audiences and the framing of the photographs being used. However, these studies can still provide a useful background and framework for the current study.

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<sup>12</sup> Rodriguez and Dimitrova.

<sup>13</sup> Rodriguez and Dimitrova.

<sup>14</sup> Emily M. Farris and Heather Silber Mohamed, "Picturing Immigration: How the Media Criminalizes Immigrants," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 818, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1484375>, 4.



A study by Fernandez and Lirola from 2012, on the representation of immigration in the Spanish press, looked at both the visual and textual frames.<sup>15</sup> They analyzed eight texts regarding immigrants using a critical discourse analysis and the accompanying photo's through visual grammar. They focused on the photographs and the headlines and subheadings of the article, because these would catch the most attention from the reader. They found that the immigrants were often portrayed negatively, and that this representation influenced the audience's attitude towards them in a negative way.

Another relevant study is a study by Batziou, which focused on framing 'otherness' in press photographs.<sup>16</sup> This study compared photographs in newspapers from Greece and Spain. In both countries they analyzed photographs in both left-wing and right-wing newspapers using a content analysis. Batziou found that immigrants in Greece and Spain were mostly framed as 'others'. There was almost no interaction with the locals, and the immigrants were usually portrayed as a group, instead of as individuals. Batziou argues that this not only confirms, but also strengthens their status as outsiders.

A third study, more similar to the scope of this paper, is a study by Farris and Mohamed.<sup>17</sup> They investigated how the media criminalizes immigrants and analyzed photographs in three national news magazines that were published between 2000 and 2010. They found that immigrants were mostly portrayed in a negative light and as undocumented. Both Batziou and Farris and Mohamed compared newspapers with a different political orientation, but neither studied the differences between these two. They aimed to reflect the range of newspapers by analyzing both left-wing and right-wing newspapers instead. A common thread in earlier research on the press coverage of refugees seems to be that refugees are often either portrayed as a threat or as victims.<sup>18</sup> Some studies might identify a third category, but these two are always present. The division between threat and victims could help with identifying frames and their association with either solidarity or inequality. Until now, research has not yet explored whether the visuals from newspapers are more likely to promote solidarity or inequality in relation to the political choices of the newspapers' audiences. This is useful to

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<sup>15</sup> Eliecer Crespo Fernández and María Martínez Lirola, "Lexical and Visual Choices in the Representation of Immigration in the Spanish Press," *Spanish in Context* 9, no. 1 (2012): 27–57, <https://doi.org/10.1075/sic.9.1.02cre>.

<sup>16</sup> Athanasia Batziou, "Framing 'otherness' in Press Photographs: The Case of Immigrants in Greece and Spain," *Journal of Media Practice* 12, no. 1 (May 1, 2011): 41–60, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.12.1.41\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.12.1.41_1).

<sup>17</sup> Farris and Silber Mohamed, "Picturing Immigration."

<sup>18</sup> Crespo Fernández and Martínez Lirola; Keith Greenwood and Tj Thomson, "Framing the Migration: A Study of News Photographs Showing People Fleeing War and Persecution," *International Communication Gazette*, March 7, 2019, 174804851983351, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048519833515>; Srividya Ramasubramanian, "Framing the Syrian Refugee Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Arabic and English News Sources," 2018, 19.

know since, if there appears to be a connection, the visuals in newspapers might shape our thoughts and attitude towards, in this case, refugees. To explore this connection, the following questions will be addressed in this paper:

RQ1a: What frames are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *De Telegraaf*?

RQ1b: What frames are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *de Volkskrant*?

RQ2: In what way do the frames that are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *De Telegraaf* and *de Volkskrant* differ from each other?

## 4 Research methods

### 4.1 Research strategy

This study draws on the framing theory, which has been proven to be a useful instrument in the earlier study by Batziou, mentioned above.<sup>19</sup> This theory will help support the understanding of the way visuals in newspapers can construct meaning. The strategy used in this study to analyze the visuals and identify the frames, is a visual (content) analysis. This strategy has been chosen, to gain a better understanding of the visual choices being made by the photographer and editors of the newspapers. For this study, the front-page visuals that have been published in two newspapers during the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis in the second half of 2015 will be analyzed. The visuals will be analyzed as distinct units. This study will therefore focus only on the visuals, and not on the accompanying title and article. The title will however be used to filter out the relevant visuals.

### 4.2 Sampling of the data

This specific period has been chosen, because 2015 was the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis. This means that there will be more photographs on the front page and that they were given more attention than when they were on another page. The months August through November have specifically been selected, because of the number of asylum applications in these months. According to UNCHR statistics, most Asylum applications in the Netherlands in 2015 came from refugee who fled from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq and Syria.<sup>20</sup> As you can

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<sup>19</sup> Batziou, A. (2011) Framing ‘otherness’ in press photographs: The case of immigrants in Greece and Spain, *Journal of Media Practice*, 12:1, 41-60.

<sup>20</sup> “UNHCR Population Statistics - Data - Asylum Seekers Monthly.”

see in Figure 1, the number of asylum applications peaked between August and November, with at least half of the Asylum applications submitted by Syrian refugees.

The medium newspaper has been chosen for several reasons. According to a study, in January 2015, 60% of the people read a newspaper daily and in June 2016, this was 52%. This means that more than half of the population in the Netherlands read a newspaper on a daily basis in 2015.<sup>21</sup> Another reason, is the fact that the data in these newspapers has remained unchanged, while the online media might have deleted certain items over time. The choice to analyze front pages specifically has been made because they get more attention from the readers and they reflect what the newspapers think is important. The two newspapers whose visuals will be compared, are *De Telegraaf* and *de Volkskrant*. The choice for these two newspapers is based on their audiences. During the elections of March 2015 in the Netherlands, Dutch pollster Maurice de Hond studied for which parties people vote and what newspapers they read.<sup>22</sup> This study was carried out amongst people who read the newspapers at least twice a week. According to de Hond, the three main parties that people who read *De Telegraaf* vote for are PVV (25%), VVD (24%) and CDA (16%). The CDA is considered centrum right, and the VVD and PVV are right-wing parties. The three main parties that people who read *de Volkskrant* vote for are PvdA (23%), D66 (16%) and SP (14%). The PvdA and SP are both left-wing parties and D66 is considered centrum left. The other party in the polls, GL, is a left-wing party.

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<sup>21</sup> Ewout Witte and Suzanne van Strien, "1e reguliere meting van 2018 naar het kopen, lezen en lenen van boeken," n.d., 67.

<sup>22</sup> AD, "Wat stemmen krantenlezers?," AD.nl, March 18, 2015, <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/wat-stemmen-krantenlezers~a655e176/>.

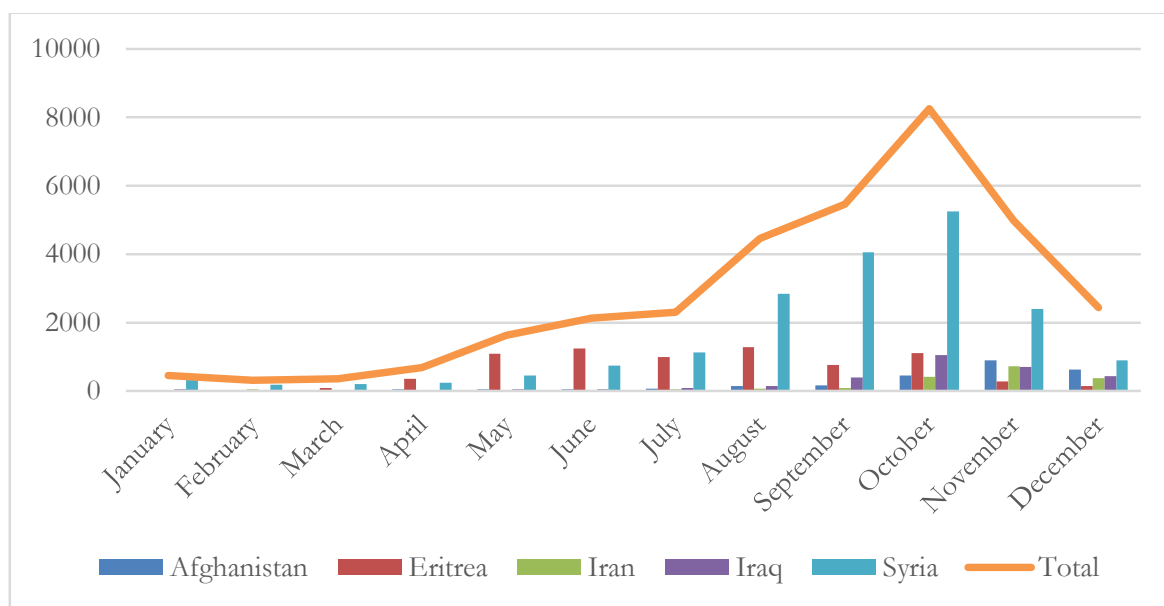


Figure 1: Number of Asylum Applications in the Netherlands in 2015<sup>23</sup>

All the percentages can be found in figure 2. One important thing to note here is that the two newspapers do not only differ on the political orientation of their audience, but they are also different types of newspapers. *De Telegraaf* is a ‘popular newspaper’, while *de Volkskrant* is a ‘quality newspaper’. Even though it is good to keep this difference in mind, it is not a limitation for this study. The newspapers have been chosen solely based on the audience of the newspapers, not the different characters. This study uses purposive sampling, where only photographs related to the Syrian refugee crisis will be selected. This selection will be based on the caption accompanying the photo.

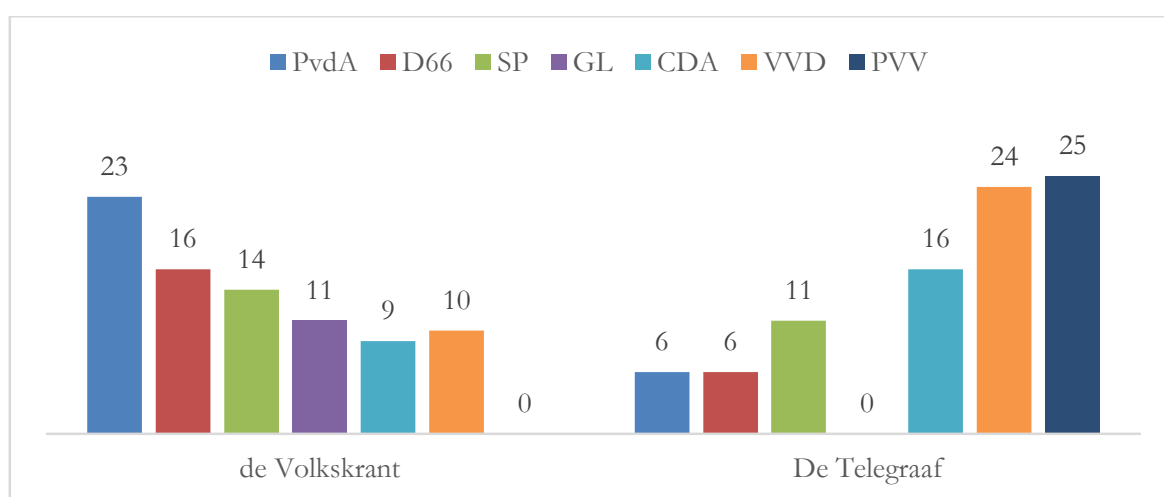


Figure 2: The parties people reading de Volkskrant and De Telegraaf vote for ...

<sup>23</sup> “UNHCR Population Statistics - Data - Asylum Seekers Monthly.”

### 4.3 Data collection

The data collection process took more time than expected, because it was impossible to get online access to the front pages of the newspapers from 2015. Online, only separate articles could be found, often without visuals and without any indication whether they appeared on front pages. Through a paid online account for *de Volkskrant*, only newspapers dating back two years could be viewed and downloaded. The newspaper was also not able to send the frontpages as pdf files, because they did not have these prepared and they did not have the resources to scan close to 100 front pages. Unfortunately, they also no longer received visitors in the archives and did not know where hardcopies of the newspapers could be found elsewhere. Eventually, after contacting several public libraries, the Royal Library in The Hague turned out to have hardcopies of all the newspapers, which I was allowed to look at and take photos of in their ‘special collections’ department. Frontpages from *De Telegraaf* were also not accessible online, but it was possible to look at the frontpages through an appointment in Amsterdam at their headquarters. After the appointment, *De Telegraaf* was able to send pdf files of the relevant front pages.

### 4.4 Framework for data analysis

The visuals were analyzed using a coding scheme. The variables in the coding scheme were based on the variables used in a study by Zhang and Hellmueller.<sup>24</sup> The variables fit in the four different levels of framing proposed by Rodriguez and Dimitrova. Most of the variables fit in the denotative level, describing the visuals, except the last variable news frames, which fits in the level of ideological attachment of visual framing. All the variables in the denotative level were used to help identify this last variable. Two of the levels proposed by Rodriguez and Dimitrova, stylistic framing and the connotative level were not addressed. These two levels were regarded as having a lower relevance to the aim of this study because they were not crucial for the identification of the news frames and they would be more difficult to objectively categorize than the variables in the other levels. The variable ‘identity of the refugee’ from the research by Rodriguez and Dimitrova was also omitted, because of its lower relevance to this research since all photos are related to the Syrian refugee crisis. The variable ‘type of frame’ has been added since this study focusses not only on photographs and the variable ‘theme’ has been added, which was taken from research by Greenwood and

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<sup>24</sup> Xu Zhang and Lea Hellmueller, “Visual Framing of the European Refugee Crisis in *Der Spiegel* and *CNN International*: Global Journalism in News Photographs,” *International Communication Gazette* 79, no. 5 (August 2017): 483–510, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048516688134>.

Thomson into framing migration.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the option of ‘no refugees’ has been added to the variable visual patterns of refugees. The choice for the different news frames is based on earlier research and with the divide between solidarity and inequality in mind.<sup>26</sup> The news frames human-interest and lose/gain can be associated with solidarity, while the news frames xenophobia/intolerance and law and control can be associated with inequality. The news frame politics will not play a role in this distinction. The variables used in the analysis are the following:

- Visual news image identification (*De Telegraaf*, *de Volkskrant*)
- Visual image publication date
- Type of frame (photo, map, graph/table, other)
- Theme (transit, interaction, waiting, symbolic, action, portrait, other)<sup>27</sup>
- Visual patterns of refugees (individuals, small group, medium group, large group)
- Refugees’ facial expressions (not recognizable, positive, negative, mixed)
- The presence of other news actors (no other actors, law enforcement, local, support, politicians)
- News frames (human-interest, intolerance, lose/gain, law and control, politics)

A more detailed description of the variables can be found in annex 1. It is important to note here that for the last two variables the visuals can fit in more than one category. A visual might for example be analyzed as fitting in both the human-interest and politics frame. As a result, the percentages in the analysis might add up to more than 100%.

## 5 Description and analysis of the data

In this section, a general description of the data based on the variables at a denotative level will be provided, followed by an analysis of the data including the variable ‘news frames’.

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<sup>25</sup> Greenwood and Thomson, “Framing the Migration.”

<sup>26</sup> Rodriguez and Dimitrova, “The Levels of Visual Framing”; Holli A Semetko and Patti M Valkenburg, “Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News,” *Journal of Communication*, 2000, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Greenwood and Thomson, “Framing the Migration.”, 9.

### 5.1 Description of the data

The first thing that stands out when looking at the data, is the difference in the number of times news about refugees was covered on the front pages, both with and without visuals. Table 1 shows that in both these cases, *de Volkskrant* had almost twice as many items about the Syrian refugee crisis in the months August through November. Both newspapers feature however several items on their front pages each day, with accompanying visuals for at least three of these items. Only the items with visuals will be part of this study.

*Table 1: The number of times news concerning the Syrian refugee crisis appeared on the front pages.*

	Items with visuals	Items without visuals
De Telegraaf	22	29
De Volkskrant	40	46

When looking at the type of visuals in both newspapers, there is also a difference as can be seen in table 2. While both newspapers primarily use photographs, *de Volkskrant* also makes use of other types of visuals, including maps, graphs, tables and cartoons.

*Table 2: The number of times different types of visuals appeared in both newspapers*

	Photos	Map	Graph/table	Other
De Telegraaf	21	1	0	0
De Volkskrant	32	3	3	2

This difference is reflected in the results of different themes of the visuals, as can be found in figures 3 and 4. In *de Volkskrant* the theme of 27 percent of the visuals is labelled as ‘other’. Most of these 11 visuals are non-photographs. The percentage of visuals in this category in *De Telegraaf* is considerably lower, at 9 percent, with two visuals only. When we look at the other categories, we see that *De Telegraaf* has considerably more visuals labelled as ‘portrait’ and ‘interaction’, while *de Volkskrant* has considerably more visuals labelled as ‘transit’. When looking at these percentages, one should keep in mind that percentages of nine percent or lower, reflect only one or two visuals.

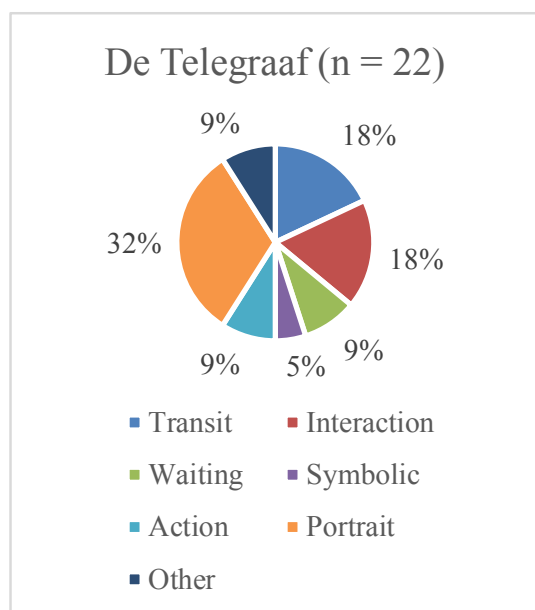


Figure 3: The percentage of visuals in each category in De Telegraaf

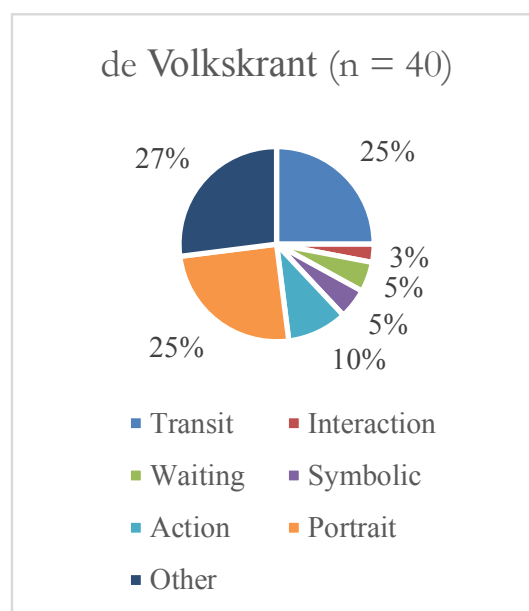


Figure 4: The percentage of visuals in each category in de Volkskrant

The next variables look more specifically at the actors in the visuals. Here, only the photographs and cartoons have been included since these are the only types on visuals on which the actors occur. Given the relatively high number of maps and graphs in *de Volkskrant*, it would be unrepresentative to include all the types of visuals. Starting with the visual pattern of refugees, figure 5 and 6 show that in both the newspapers there are no refugees in roughly half of the photographs. The largest difference between both newspapers is the fact that in *de Volkskrant*, refugees are over three times more likely to be shown as individuals.

When looking at the facial expressions of the refugees, no significant differences have been found. In most photographs the facial expressions are not recognizable and where they are, there are equally many refugees with positive facial expressions as refugees with negative facial expressions.

Looking at the presence of other news actors in figure 7 and 8, shows again a difference between both newspapers. In more than two-thirds of the photographs in *De Telegraaf*, other actors are present, while in over two-thirds of the photographs in *de Volkskrant* no other actors are present. In *De Telegraaf* the percentage of other actors is evenly spread throughout the different categories. In *de Volkskrant* it is mainly law enforcement and politicians who are present as other actors in the photographs.



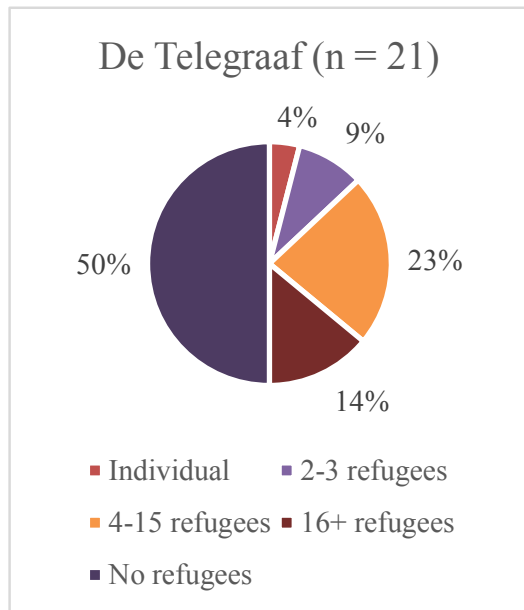


Figure 5: The percentage of refugees in the photographs and cartoons in De Telegraaf

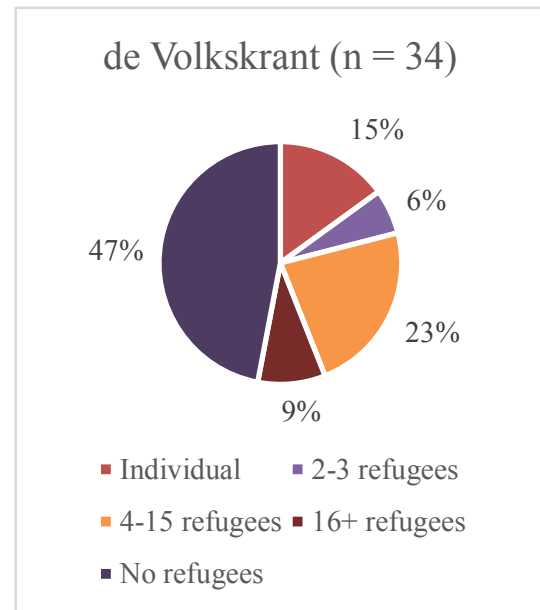


Figure 6: The percentage of refugees in the photographs and cartoons in de Volkskrant

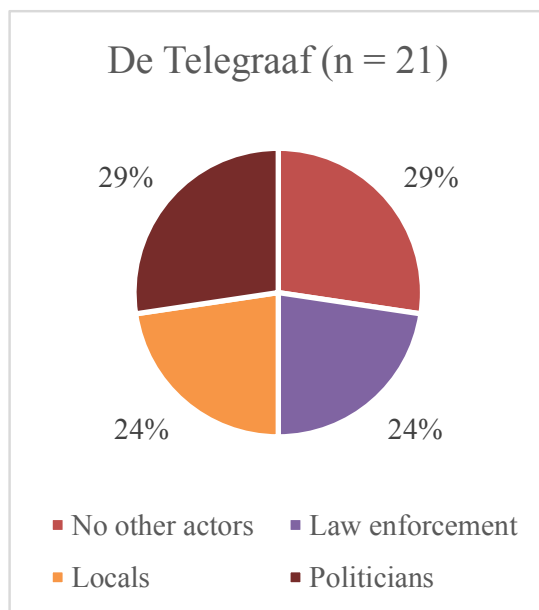


Figure 7: The percentage of other actors in the photographs and cartoons in De Telegraaf

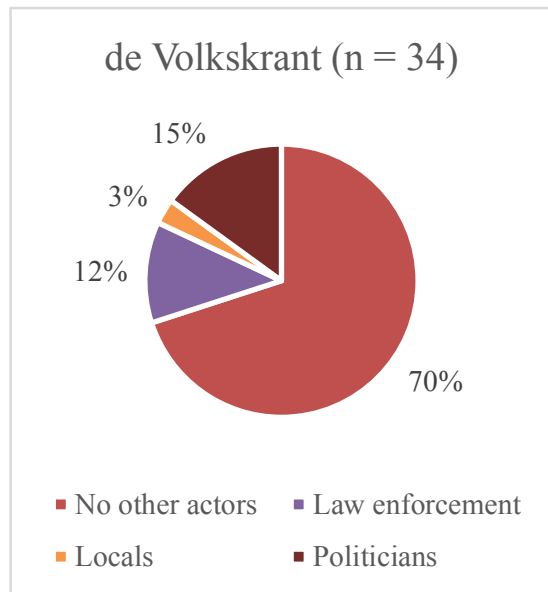


Figure 8: The percentage of other actors in the photographs and cartoons in de Volkskrant

## 5.2 Analysis of the data

The main focus of this study was to analyze and compare the news frames that are being used in the two newspapers. In this sub-section, the different questions posed at the end of section 3, related to this focus, will be addressed.

RQ1a: What frames are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *De Telegraaf*?

When analyzing the visuals in *De Telegraaf*, the most used frame was the human-interest frame and the least used was the lose/gain frame, as can be found in table 3. In total, there were 10 visuals identified as using ‘solidarity’-frames and 7 visuals as using ‘inequality’-frames. In figure 9 you find an example of a visual in which the human-interest frame was used. In this photograph you see a group of four refugees in a refugee camp surround by garbage. There are no other actors present except for other groups of refugees in the background. This photograph puts an emphasis on the suffering on refugees and the way they are living, by showing the horrible conditions they have to deal with in this camp. The fence around the camp that you see in the photo, implies that this is not a situation the family chose for nor a situation they can easily escape from.

Table 3: The number of visuals using each frame in *De Telegraaf*

	Human-interest	Intolerance	Lose/gain	Law enforcement	Politics
De Telegraaf	8	3	2	4	5



Figure 9: September 14, 2015. Source: *de Volkskrant*

In figure 10 you see a photograph which has been analyzed as a visual in which the law and control frame has been used. In the photograph you see a man, posing for the photo and dressed in a camouflage outfit. Behind the man you can see a fence, which he seems to be guarding, in order not to let refugees in.



Figure 10: August 18, 2015. Source: *de Volkskrant*

RQ1b: What frames are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *de Volkskrant*?

When analyzing the visuals in *de Volkskrant*, the most used frame was clearly human-interest, being used almost twice as much as the second most-used frame. The least used frame was the lose/gain frame. In total, there were 22 visuals identified as using ‘solidarity’-frames and 16 visuals as using ‘inequality’-frames. The results can be found in table 5. In figure 11 you can find an example of a visual in which the law enforcement frame has been used. In this photograph you see a law enforcement officer interacting with a young refugee. Next to the boy are two other refugees. All the actors in this visual are smiling, implying that the law enforcement officer is helping the refugees.

Table 4: The number of visuals using each frame in *de Volkskrant*

	Human-interest	Intolerance	Lose/gain	Law enforcement	Politics
De Volkskrant	19	5	3	11	5



Figure 11: September 2, 2015. Source: *De Telegraaf*

In figure 12, you see an example of a visual that has been analyzed as using the intolerance frame. In the visual you see only local citizens, voting whether they want to lower the number of refugees moving to their village. This visual shows a clear majority of the people voting against the refugees, showing their intolerance towards them.



Figure 12: November 19, 2015. Local people voting in favor of lowering the number of refugees (600) that would move to their village. Source: *De Telegraaf*

RQ2: In what way do the frames that are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *De Telegraaf* and *de Volkskrant* differ from each other?

When comparing these two newspapers, there does not seem to be a major difference in the frames that are being used in the visuals. The minor differences

can be found in figure 13. The politics frame seems to be more prevalent in *De Telegraaf*, while the human-interest and law and control frames seem to be more prevalent in *de Volkskrant*. As already has been stated in the methods section, the news frames human-interest and lose/gain can be associated with solidarity, while the news frames xenophobia/intolerance and law and control can be associated with inequality. Figure 14 shows the percentage of the frames along the divide solidarity and inequality. Looking at this figure, *de Volkskrant* seems to use both the ‘solidarity’- and ‘inequality’-frames more. However, figure 15 also shows the percentage of the frames along this divide but leaves out the visuals using the politics frame. This figure shows that both newspapers use the ‘solidarity’- and ‘inequality’-frames just as much, with a preference for the ‘solidarity’-frames.

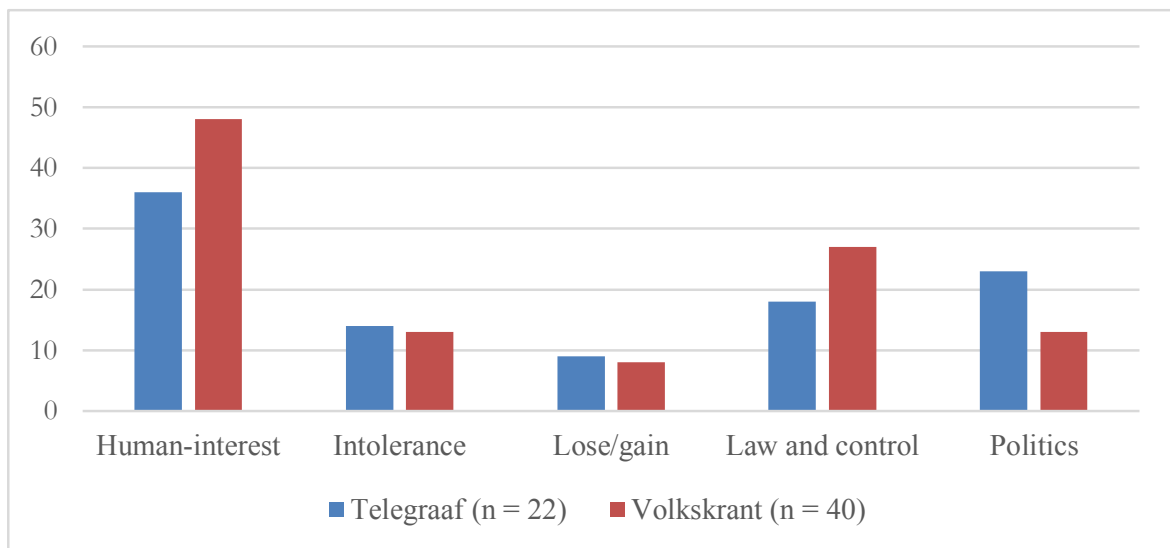


Figure 13: Percentage of visuals in which the frames are present

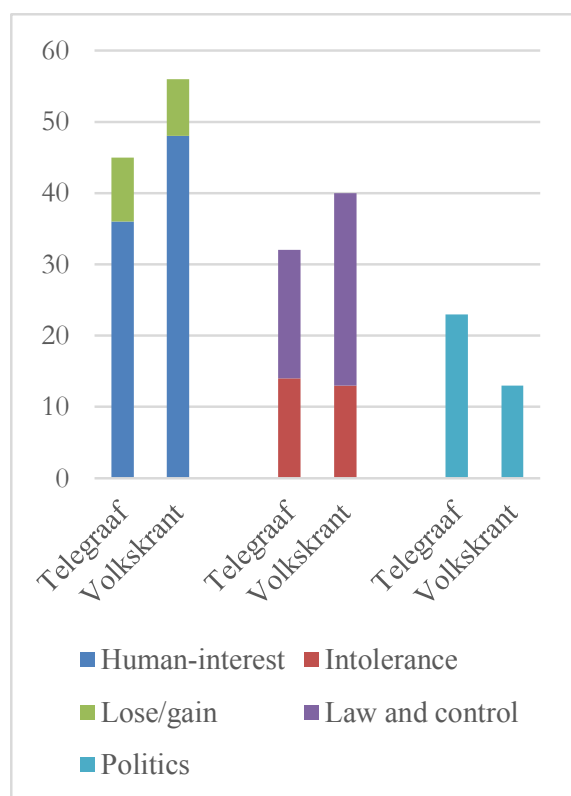


Figure 14: Comparing the frames associated with solidarity and inequality

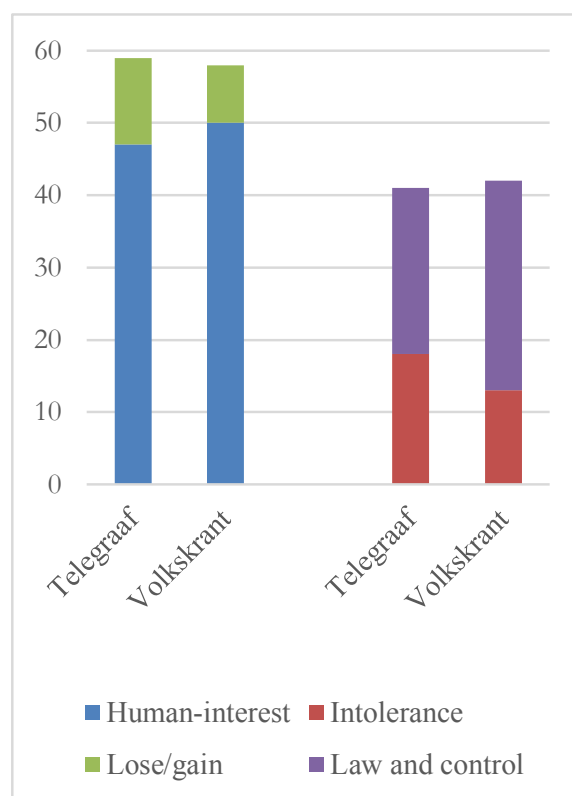


Figure 15: Comparing only the visuals with the frames associated with solidarity and inequality

## 6 Conclusion

This study analyzed the visual depiction of immigrants in two national Dutch newspapers both with a different political orientation. Visual depiction is, as we have seen in the introduction of this paper, extremely important. The Council of Europe even reported on the central role that the European press played in framing the arrival of refugees and migrants as a crisis for Europe.<sup>28</sup> Other studies have found that when immigrants were portrayed negatively, this had a negative influence the audience's attitude towards them.<sup>29</sup> This makes it essential to analyze the role of newspapers in this respect.

Drawing on the framing theory and with models based on those used in earlier research, the visuals that appeared on the front pages of the two newspapers during the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis were analyzed. The aim of the study was to identify and compare the frames being used in *De Telegraaf* and *de*

<sup>28</sup> Dr Myria Georgiou and Dr Rafal Zaborowski, "Council of Europe Report: Media Coverage of the 'Refugee Crisis': A Cross-European Perspective," 2017, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Crespo Fernández and Martínez Lirola, "Lexical and Visual Choices in the Representation of Immigration in the Spanish Press."



*Volkskrant* and explore in what way they depict refugees. First, the study analyzed the frames that are being used in the visuals depicting refugees in *De Telegraaf*. In total, there were 10 visuals identified as using ‘solidarity’-frames and 7 visuals as using ‘inequality’-frames. The human-interest frame was used the most and the lose/gain frame was used the least. Second, the frames that are being used in *de Volkskrant* were analyzed. In total, there were 22 visuals identified as using ‘solidarity’-frames and 16 visuals as using ‘inequality’-frames. In this newspaper, it was also the human-interest frame that has been used most and the lose/gain frame that has been used the least. The analysis of the two newspapers shows several differences between the two. The most noticeable difference is that even though both the newspapers feature on average the same number of visuals on a front page, the visuals on *de Volkskrant* concerning the Syrian refugee crisis were almost twice as high as the number of visuals in *De Telegraaf*, demonstrating the emphasis being placed on the Syrian refugee crisis over other news items. Given the framing power that has been attributed to visuals, the number of times they occur on front pages will also have an impact on the audience.

On most of the variables being studied, differences have been found, but only for some of them conclusions can be drawn. While *De Telegraaf* has mainly printed photographs, *de Volkskrant* has also included other types of visuals, drawing also attention to numbers and facts concerning the refugee crisis. This could indicate a more rational approach, presenting the facts to the audience, without a clear focus on the refugees as either threat or victim, leaving more room for the audience’s own interpretation. The photographs in *De Telegraaf* contain two out of three times other actors, while the photographs in *de Volkskrant* contain two out of three times no other actors. The absence of other actors in *de Volkskrant* puts the focus more on the refugees while the presence of other actors in *De Telegraaf* puts the refugees more within the larger social context. Another noticeable difference is the fact that when other actors are present, the *De Telegraaf* has more locals being depicted in the photographs, while the other actors in *de Volkskrant* are mainly law enforcement and politicians. The presence of locals could portray the refugees more as a part of ‘us’, while the presence of law enforcement and politicians could portray the refugees as a part of ‘them’, and thereby fostering inequality opposed to solidarity. This depends however on the way the other actors are portrayed and how they are interacting with the refugees. Interesting is also the fact that the visuals in *De Telegraaf* used the politics frame almost twice as often as the visuals in *de Volkskrant*. This could put an emphasis on the polarized debate around refugees, but also take the emphasis away from the actual refugees and facts and numbers surrounding this topic.

Although the newspapers can be considered as having audiences on different sides of the political spectrum, no significant difference has been found in the

newspapers concerning the news frames related to solidarity and inequality. This would mean that even though the majority of the readers vote either for left- or right-wing parties, the newspapers do not reflect this and remain, so to say, neutral. Interesting to note is that both newspapers appeared to have a preference for the ‘solidarity’-frames over the ‘inequality’-frames. It is a remarkable finding that there was no difference found concerning the ‘solidarity-’ and ‘inequality-’frames. This does not mean however that there is no difference between the newspapers. The other results of this study show that there are actually differences between these newspapers, with *De Telegraaf* having a stronger focus on the bigger social context and the relation between the refugees and locals, and *de Volkskrant* having a stronger focus on the refugees themselves and the facts and numbers.

As mentioned in the introduction, the focus of this study was solely on Dutch newspapers. Other European countries also have newspapers with more left-wing and right-wing audiences (for example *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet* in Sweden<sup>30</sup> or the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* in the UK<sup>31</sup>) that could be compared. This does however not mean that any conclusion of this research can be translated to other countries. However, the framing by means of visual depiction that is addressed in this paper, should receive more attention in all countries, considering the (political) power and possible implications attributed to it.

## 6.1 Limitations, potential problems and further research

One limitation of this study is that there were no resources available to train other people to code the visuals. The coding scheme has been designed and specified in a way that leaves as little room as possible for a personal interpretation of the visuals, to ensure the reliability of the analysis and final results. Another limitation of the study is that it is difficult to measure the influence of the differences that have been found. The question remains whether the audiences of the newspapers already vote for these left- and right-wing parties and therefore choose these newspapers or whether their vote is influenced by their choice for a specific newspaper. Further research could explore the possible influence and the audience’s choice for newspapers. Further research also has to be carried out to further explore the differences and similarities between newspapers with audiences on different sides of the political spectrum. This research could include

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<sup>30</sup> “Sweden - World Newspapers and Magazines - Worldpress.Org,” accessed January 14, 2020, <https://www.worldpress.org/newspapers/EUROPE/Sweden.cfm>.

<sup>31</sup> “How Left or Right-Wing Are the UK’s Newspapers? | YouGov,” accessed January 14, 2020, <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/03/07/how-left-or-right-wing-are-uks-newspapers>.



studies carried out over a longer period of time and could including more newspapers, possibly from different countries.

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## Annex 1: Coding Scheme

### General information

1. Visual news image identification
  1. De Volkskrant
  2. De Telegraaf
2. Visual image publication date

### Denotative level

3. Type of visual
  1. Photo
  2. Map
  3. Graph/table
  4. Other
4. Theme
  1. Transit: *People on the move. Either on foot, with a boat or public transport.*
  2. Interaction: *Interaction between people. Both between refugees and refugees and locals/law enforcement officers/etc.*
  3. Waiting: *Waiting in a queue, resting, sleeping*
  4. Symbolic: *Obstacles like fences, barriers, barricades and check-points might symbolize limited access. Life-vests and blankets might symbolize the journey and the dangers of the journey. This theme will only be chosen if there are no people in the visual.*
  5. Action: *One or more people engaged in an activity that takes place in one location. This could for example be engagement with technology, praying, education or eating.*
  6. Portrait: *Focus on people instead of events.*
  7. Other: *Any visual that does not fit in the above categories.*
5. Visual patterns of refugees
  1. Individuals
  2. Small group: *2-3 refugees*
  3. Medium group: *4-15 refugees*
  4. Large group: *16+ refugees*
  5. No refugees
6. Refugees' facial expressions
  1. Not recognizable
  2. Positive: *happy, grateful*
  3. Negative: *angry, fearful, desperate*
  4. Mixed: *both positive and negative facial expressions*

7. The presence of other news actors

1. No other actors
2. Law enforcement
3. Local citizens

Ideological attachment of visual framing

8. News frame

1. Human interest: *Lives and suffering of refugees, emotions and personal stories.*
2. Intolerance: *Intolerance and xenophobia from locals, as well as fear.*
3. Lose/gain: *Lost and saved lives.*
4. Law and control: *Border control and law enforcement.*
5. Politics: *Politicians.*

# **Women and Equal Citizenship: Discourses on Abortion in Germany and Poland in the 1990s**

*Hanna Schlegel*

## **1 Introduction**

Gender equality is today being discussed more than ever, and many countries as well as international human rights organizations commit to achieving equal citizenship of women and men.<sup>1</sup> However, the basic problem persists – there are still legal, political and social obstacles, resulting in a palpable gap between formal commitments and the reality of women's lives.

Reproductive rights are not as well established in international human rights laws as other citizenship rights because they concern issues – like conception, pregnancy, childbirth and abortion – that affect women more directly than men.<sup>2</sup> As to abortion, international organizations increasingly hold that the access to safe abortion services is a critical component of women's human rights.<sup>3</sup> In this

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna L. Grossman and Linda C. McClain, 'Introduction', in *Gender Equality: Dimensions of Women's Equal Citizenship*, ed. Joanna L. Grossman and Linda C. McClain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Stark, 'Reproductive Rights and the Reproduction of Gender', in *Gender Equality: Dimensions of Women's Equal Citizenship*, ed. Joanna L. Grossman and Linda C. McClain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 347.

<sup>3</sup> David A. Grimes et al., 'Unsafe Abortion: The Preventable Pandemic', ed. World Health Organization, *Sexual and Reproductive Health* 4 (2009): 9.

sense, access to abortion becomes a crucial factor in ensuring gender equality and women's equal citizenship. Moreover, a ban or heavy restriction on abortion does not diminish numbers of abortions, but women seek illegal and unsafe abortions instead.<sup>4</sup> This creates social injustice and inequity because it effectively divides the society into those who can and those who cannot afford to find ways of getting around the law.<sup>5</sup>

Discourses on abortion have to deal with the question as to what extent the autonomy of women can be controlled, and by whom. As reproduction has been viewed traditionally as one of women's key duties to the state, discourses on abortion rely on a specific construction of women's citizenship within a socio-legal community.<sup>6</sup>

Based on this assumption, *this paper aims at evaluating to what extent women are portrayed as equal citizens in the German Constitutional Court's and the Polish Constitutional Tribunal's judgement on abortion in 1993 and 1997 respectively*. The notion of equal citizenship as a theoretical frame of this paper is productive because citizenship remains the common language for expressing "the highest fulfilment of democratic and egalitarian aspiration"<sup>7</sup> and can thus act as a "yardstick against which progress can be measured."<sup>8</sup>

In order to answer the research question, at first the notion of equal citizenship shall be approached theoretically. Thereafter, the data and method used will be elaborated upon before conducting the case studies of the two judgements. In doing so, both legal and non-legal arguments will be taken into account. Legal discourses on abortion present women as democratic citizens and right holders, while the unborn human life is thought to deserve protection because of the 'compelling interest' that a sociolegal community has in it.<sup>9</sup> Non-legal arguments, on the other hand, focus on the beginning of human life and the protection it deserves. These arguments are about the *dignity of human life*, not just about the *human dignity* as legally defined<sup>10</sup> and are thus articulated in terms that appear to be non-negotiable for the law.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization, 'Safe Abortion: Technical & Policy Guidance for Health Systems' (Geneva: WHO, 2015), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Agata Chelstowska, 'Stigmatisation and Commercialisation of Abortion Services in Poland: Turning Sin into Gold', *Reproductive Health Matters* 19, no. 37 (2011): 103.

<sup>6</sup> Blanca Rodríguez-Ruiz, 'Gender in Constitutional Discourses on Abortion: Looking at Spain from a Comparative Perspective', *Social & Legal Studies* 25, no. 6 (2016): 700.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Hobson and Ruth Lister, 'Citizenship', in *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*, ed. Barbara Hobson, Jane Lewis, and Birte Siim (Northampton: Edward Elgar Pub, 2002), 36.

<sup>9</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, 'Gender in Constitutional Discourses on Abortion: Looking at Spain from a Comparative Perspective', 700.

<sup>10</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 31–32.

This analysis is to examine to what extent the discursively constructed category of ‘woman’ persists, disclosing gender inequality. Given the commitments to achieving gender equality and equal citizenship on international level, it is considered important to assess the status quo and throw light on underlying structures in order to develop ideas and strategies to reach those goals in the future. The conclusion, finally, will summarize the findings.

## 2 Theorising Equal Citizenship

In 1950, British sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall developed the political concept of citizenship, defining it as encapsulating civil, political and social rights, and as “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community.”<sup>11</sup> The wording “full membership” opened up the possibility to investigate whether community members truly have the same rights and opportunities, or participate on equal terms.<sup>12</sup> His understanding of citizenship was soon criticized for allegedly failing to discuss the issue of ‘second-class citizens’ – a rhetoric often evoked to indict the gap between the ideal full citizenship and the reality of unequal citizenship for certain groups in society<sup>13</sup> – by assuming that everybody has the same civil rights, hence taking for granted the gender and racial hierarchies in society.<sup>14</sup>

Political theorist Carole Pateman understands Marshall’s social contract as from the start premised on an implicit sexual contract: “sexual in the sense of patriarchal – that is, the contract establishes men’s political right over women – and also sexual in the sense of establishing orderly access by men to women’s bodies.”<sup>15</sup> In this sense, the contract creates what Adrienne Rich calls “the law of male sex-right.”<sup>16</sup> Women’s exercise of citizenship and access to political, economic and civil rights were thus severely curbed by legal limitations founded on traditional gender norms.

In the 1990s, scholars started to increasingly reexamine Marshall’s typology and early feminist readings of women’s exclusion from politics and the national community.<sup>17</sup> The social realm, a domain considered distinct from the political

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 28.

<sup>12</sup> Grossman and McClain, ‘Introduction’, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Grossman and McClain, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, ‘Contract versus Charity: Why Is There No Social Citizenship in the United States?’, *Socialist Review* 22, no. 3 (1992): 50.

<sup>15</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Adrienne Rich, ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’, *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 645.

<sup>17</sup> Nimisha Barton and Richard S. Hopkins, ‘Introduction’, in *Practiced Citizenship: Women, Gender, and the State in Modern France*, ed. Nimisha Barton and Richard S. Hopkins (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 1.

and economic, moved more into the focus, resulting in an expanded interest in families with “the heart of the family [being] inexorably the woman.”<sup>18</sup> However, despite the newfound interest in the social invested woman, every exercise of social rights still referred to women’s capacity as mothers and wives, and were therefore dependent on a “gendered and sexualized embodiment of their reproductive selves.”<sup>19</sup>

By attempting to answer the research question, this paper examines the tensions between the constitutional courts’ judgements and women’s citizenship rights, more precisely their reproductive rights, drawing on Rodríguez-Ruiz’s study of abortion and women’s citizenship in Spain. Decriminalising abortion is rare in the continental European legal tradition, justified by the conflict between the protection due to the unborn human life and the pregnant woman’s rights.<sup>20</sup> According to Rodríguez-Ruiz, discourses on abortion are profoundly gendered, and especially non-legal discourses subject women to the rule of men and/or a male state,<sup>21</sup> disclosing a construction of gender that articulates women’s passive citizenship.<sup>22</sup>

However, by analysing the development, and resistance against, the Spanish Organic Act 2/2010, Rodríguez-Ruiz finds that this law, in contrast to the European legal tradition, stands as part of an increasing understanding of abortion from the perspective of women’s active citizenship.<sup>23</sup>

Building on the theoretical frame of Rodríguez-Ruiz’s study, this paper aims at analysing whether the judgements of the German and Polish constitutional courts make a similar development evident. Although from the 1990s, in contrast to the Spanish law which entered into force in 2010, these judgements are similarly representative for Germany and Poland because legislation on abortion has not been altered since.

This paper’s thesis is that the reasoning in both the German and the Polish judgement does not represent women as equal citizens in the sense that they are being patronised by having authorities decide over their bodies. They are thus not allowed to exercise their reproductive rights, especially when the authorities’ argumentation draws on unacknowledged notions of women’s citizenship duties. This goes back to the assumption that abortion policies seem particularly vulnerable to being used by state institutions to regulate identity categories, especially

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<sup>18</sup> Denise Riley, *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 50.

<sup>19</sup> Barton and Hopkins, ‘Introduction’, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, ‘Gender in Constitutional Discourses on Abortion: Looking at Spain from a Comparative Perspective’, 702.

<sup>21</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, 701.

<sup>22</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, 710.

<sup>23</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, 706.



that of 'woman.'<sup>24</sup> This may be, at least in part, because debates about abortion feed themselves from expectations and fears about identity and entity categories, thus reflecting the notion of what it means to 'become' a citizen.

Apart from that, it is expected that the courts' discourses in Germany and Poland are framed around similar considerations with differing emphasis. For both countries, the principle of *human dignity* is of major importance. In Germany, *human dignity* is still a sore spot and highly valued due to its national socialist past during which it was so fiercely contested.<sup>25</sup> In Poland, the importance of the concept lies in the past as well. Never fully respected by the authorities in the communist period, the *fight for dignity* became an essential in the 1980s.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, *human dignity* was unanimously incorporated in to the first post-communist Constitution of the Republic of Poland in 1997.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, in Poland, the Roman Catholic Church is a powerful political player,<sup>28</sup> which is expected to be reflected in the Polish court's considerations. 95 % of Poles consider themselves as Catholics, religion thus strongly impacts social and cultural life without any signs of secularization.<sup>29</sup> In Germany, on the other hand, neither the Protestant nor the Catholic Churches carry significant political weight. Institutionally, religion and politics are not completely separated, which is made explicit in the self-identification of some parties that promote the interests and values of the Churches in politics.<sup>30</sup> In cultural terms, however, Germany is a quite secular society. While around 70 % of Germans are members of either the Catholic or the Lutheran Church, their affiliation really plays a minor role in orienting their personal lives,<sup>31</sup> which reduces the Churches' political influence.

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<sup>24</sup> Janine P. Holc, 'The Purest Democrat: Fetal Citizenship and Subjectivity in the Construction of Democracy in Poland', *Signs* 29, no. 3 (2004): 777.

<sup>25</sup> Edward J. Eberle, 'Observations on the Development of Human Dignity and Personality in German Constitutional Law: An Overview', *Liverpool Law Review* 33, no. 3 (2012): 205.

<sup>26</sup> Marta Soniewicka and Justyna Holocher, 'Human Dignity in Poland', in *Handbook of Human Dignity in Europe*, ed. Paolo Becchi and Klaus Mathis (Cham: Springer, 2019), 698.

<sup>27</sup> Soniewicka and Holocher, 698.

<sup>28</sup> Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, 'Continuity and Change in Attitudes Toward Abortion: Poland and the United States', *Politics & Gender* 1, no. 2 (2005): 298.

<sup>29</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, 'Thy Will Be Done: The Catholic Church and Politics in Poland since 1989', in *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, ed. Timothy A. Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 125.

<sup>30</sup> Myra Marx Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 76.

<sup>31</sup> Marx Ferree et al., 77.

### 3 Methodology

In this paper, the notion of ‘equal citizenship’ is to be understood as encompassing formal citizenship as well as a substantive conception of citizenship which includes rights, duties and obligations that members of a society should share.<sup>32</sup>

The focus shall be on reproductive rights. It is not the aim of this paper to include all potential variables involved in the access to sexual and reproductive rights, such as education, social and economic development, and wealth of a nation. Instead, the focus shall be on gender equality, considering it the most important factor that affects the achievements of women’s reproductive rights.<sup>33</sup> Gender equality is to be measured by looking into the ways in which women’s citizenship is discursively constructed through the constitutional courts’ judgements on abortion.

From a poststructuralist perspective, the category of ‘woman’ is theorized as relational and discursively constructed through difference. This means that women’s role and duties are conceptualized in relation to men, disclosing an underlying gender/sex system. By using discourse analysis as a tool through which a post-structuralist account can be subjected to a systematic methodology, the analysis can demonstrate the discourse strategies utilized in justifying a potentially unequal treatment of women with regard to citizenship rights.

With regard to *critical discourse moments*<sup>34</sup> – events that stimulate news articles, commentaries and legislative actions and court decisions – it was decided to focus on the harmonization of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) legislation on abortion in Germany in 1992, and a failed attempt at liberalization of legislation on abortion in Poland in 1996. Both events occurred following a reorganization of the state that was necessary after the end of the Cold War – unification process in Germany and democratisation process in Poland – and led the respective constitutional court to issue a judgement. In this context, the judgements and reasonings of the courts are analysed since these judgements represented in both cases the point of reference for new laws on abortion that apply until today.

As for the analytical apparatus, three different lines of discourses shall be looked upon. The first one concerns non-legal considerations about the value of human existence, the second one is about solving problems between the state’s commitment to protecting the foetus and the pregnant woman’s rights, and the

<sup>32</sup> Grossman and McClain, ‘Introduction’, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Vijayan K. Pillai and Guang-zhen Wang, ‘Social Structural Model of Women’s Reproductive Rights: A Cross-National Study of Developing Countries’, *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24, no. 2 (1999): 272.

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the concept of critical discourse moments, see Paul A. Chilton, ‘Critical Discourse Moments and Critical Discourse Analysis: Towards a Methodology’, Working Paper No. 7, First Annual Conference on Discourse, Peace, Security and International Society (Ballyvaughn, Ireland: University of California, 1987).

third one focuses on a gendered preconception of the role and duties of women. These three aspects are considered useful in order to assess how the courts understand women's role and rights, and to thus gauge the extent to which women are constructed as reproductive rights holders and equal citizens.

The comparison between Germany and Poland is regarded as meaningful because there is comparable data on differing public and political attitudes towards abortion since the early 1990s for both countries. Moreover, both states were in a state of political transition, there were heated debates on the issue, and the respective constitutional court intervened in legislative efforts.

A major difference represents, however, the political landscape of the two countries at the time of the respective rulings. Germany was governed under Chancellor Helmut Kohl by a centre-right coalition consisting of his Christian Democratic Party (CDU), including its Bavarian counterpart, the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP). In Poland, in contrast, a right-wing coalition was replaced by a coalition made up of the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) after parliamentary elections in 1993.<sup>35</sup>

Another difference lies in the role of the Churches, as mentioned above. Secularization has been moving steadily forward in Germany.<sup>36</sup> In Poland, on the other hand, after the secularism imposed by the Soviets had come to an end, the Roman Catholic Church gained remarkable influence and started to exert considerable influence on Polish policy-making.<sup>37</sup>

## 4 Discourses on Abortion in Germany and Poland

### 4.1 The German Constitutional Court's judgement in 1993

With the formation of Germany as a state in 1871, abortion became a legal issue. §218 of the criminal code defined abortion as a felony that was punishable with five years' imprisonment. The Weimar Republic moderated the paragraph partially before the Nazi regime tightened it again, sharply distinguishing between 'worthy' and 'unworthy' life – prohibiting abortion in the former but demanding it in the latter case.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, a ban on advertisement for abortion was introduced. After the demise of the Nazi regime, the FRG returned to the pre-war

<sup>35</sup> Dorota Szelewa, 'Killing "Unborn Children"? The Catholic Church and Abortion Law in Poland Since 1989', *Social & Legal Studies* 25, no. 6 (2016): 751.

<sup>36</sup> Marx Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> Jelen and Wilcox, 'Continuity and Change in Attitudes Toward Abortion: Poland and the United States', 298.

<sup>38</sup> Marx Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*, 27.

criminal code, but the ban on advertisement persisted. In 1974, decriminalization of abortion in the first trimester, after having received counselling, was passed in the *Bundestag* (German federal parliament) with a narrow majority. After an appeal by opponents of the law to the Constitutional Court, the law was overturned in 1975. The Court drew on Article 1 of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) – “human dignity is inviolable”<sup>39</sup> – and deduced that “the right of developing life must take priority over the woman’s right to self-determination.”<sup>40</sup> After the Court’s ruling, the German *Bundestag* passed a revised version of the law in 1976, permitting abortion on criminal, medical, eugenic and social grounds.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile in the GDR, a reform was passed very quietly in 1972. As a result of the media being controlled by the state, no public discussion on the issue took place, and abortion was legalized within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.<sup>42</sup>

The compromise found in 1976 in the FRG did not please everybody, and especially women felt deprived of their rights to self-determination. However, their protests were widely ignored.<sup>43</sup> A new chapter began with the collapse of the GDR, followed by the reunification process, when the two differing laws on abortion had to be reconciled. Each party of the *Bundestag* had its own idea about the new law, and female members of parliament from the Christian Democrats, the Liberals and the Social Democrats drafted a compromise, called the “group bill.”<sup>44</sup> It left the decision during the first trimester to the pregnant woman, as long as the rules of mandatory counselling and a waiting period were respected. The bill was passed in 1992. Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s CDU was split on the issue – 32 members in the *Bundestag* voted in favour of it, while 249 of them almost immediately appealed to the Constitutional Court.<sup>45</sup>

In May 1993, the Court overturned the new law on the grounds that it offered insufficient protection to human life, insisting that abortion remain a felony with the exceptions of rape, incest or a threat to the mother’s life. The Court’s second

<sup>39</sup> Federal Ministry of Justice, ‘Deutsches Grundgesetz [Basic Law]’, May 1949, Art 1(1), accessed 12 January 2020, <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/BJNR000010949.html>. This translation, as well as the following ones of German documents, are my own.

<sup>40</sup> Constitutional Court, ‘Schwangerschaftsabbruch I, Ref. No. 1 BvF 6/74 (BVerfGE 39, 1)’, 25 February 1975, paragraph C(II.2), accessed 12 January 2020, <http://www.servat.unibe.ch/dfr/bv039001.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Marx Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*, 34–35.

<sup>42</sup> Pamela Fisher, ‘Abortion in Post-Communist Germany: The End of Muttipolitik and a Still Birth for Feminism’, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 28, no. 1 (2005): 24.

<sup>43</sup> Marx Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*, 38.

<sup>44</sup> Marx Ferree et al., 42.

<sup>45</sup> Marx Ferree et al., 42.

senate, responsible for the judgement, consisted of seven men and one woman at that time,<sup>46</sup> and the ruling was accompanied by three dissenting opinions.

The first line of discourse that shall be analysed engages with non-legal considerations about the worth of human existence. The Court opened its judgement by stating that “the Basic Law obliges the state to protect human life, including the unborn ... human dignity also befits unborn human life,”<sup>47</sup> thus drawing on the *Grundgesetz* Article 1 that stipulates that human dignity is inviolable. The first paragraph of the Court’s judgement concludes with the statement that the “right to life of the unborn child”<sup>48</sup> will not only be valid with the mother’s acceptance of it. This line of argumentation, closely connected to the *Grundgesetz*, being the opening of the judgement can be read as a sign of its prime importance as the basis of the whole reasoning. The *Grundgesetz* is a deeply value-oriented constitution that was adopted in 1949 after the horrors of World War II.<sup>49</sup> It sought distance from the immediate past under the Nazi regime and can be understood as a sharp break from the latter’s understanding of ‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ life – now human dignity should be the most precious asset, enshrined in the very first article of the *Grundgesetz*. Based on this primary goal of protecting the dignity of human life, the Court held that is it out of question to consider the “existence of a child as a source of damage ... Therefore, it is forbidden to understand the maintenance obligation towards a child as damage.”<sup>50</sup>

The protection of the foetus that the Court considers to be the duty of the state – as stated in Paragraph 1 – is in the Court’s view only possible “if the legislature prohibits a termination of pregnancy in principle and thus imposes on [the pregnant woman] the legal obligation to carry the child to term.”<sup>51</sup> That connects to the second line of discourse to be analysed which concerns the difficulty of solving problems between the state’s commitment to protecting the foetus and the pregnant woman’s rights. In general, the Court held that the “fundamental rights of women do not go so far as to repeal the legal obligation of carrying the child.”<sup>52</sup> Legal discourses which attempt to solve problems between protecting the life of the foetus on the one hand, and rights of the pregnant woman on the other are often framed in confrontational terms. This means that the pregnant woman and the foetus are constructed as potential adversaries – they pose a danger to each

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Badura and Horst Dreier, eds., ‘Die Mitglieder Des Bundesverfassungsgerichts 1951 Bis 2001’, in *Festschrift 50 Jahre Bundesverfassungsgericht. Band 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 913–30.

<sup>47</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 1.

<sup>48</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 1.

<sup>49</sup> Eberle, ‘Observations on the Development of Human Dignity and Personality in German Constitutional Law: An Overview’, 203.

<sup>50</sup> Constitutional Court, ‘Schwangerschaftsabbruch II, Ref. No. 2 BvF 2/90, 2 BvF 4/90, 2 BvF 5/92 (BVerfGE 88, 203-366)’, recital 14.

<sup>51</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 3.

<sup>52</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 7.

other's individuality and their conflict can be solved by referring to their respective rights.<sup>53</sup> This proves to be right for this judgement, too. The Court ruled that the foetus had to be protected against its mother, and that "the right to life of the unborn child must not ... be transferred to the free, legally untied decision of a third party, not even of the mother."<sup>54</sup> However, it further stated that the legal obligation to carry the child could be repealed in exceptional cases if there were "burdens that demand such a measure of sacrificing own values of life that this cannot be expected of the woman."<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the woman had to receive pre-birth counselling.

In their dissenting opinion, judge and vice-president Gottfried Mahrenholz and judge Bertold Sommer strongly contradicted this discursive construction of the pregnant woman and the foetus as potential adversaries, emphasising that the two are a unique entity – "duality in unity,"<sup>56</sup> as it is called in the judgement. Consequently, the judges argued that it was the pregnant woman who could decide for or against having the child in the early phase of the pregnancy if she had previously sought counselling.<sup>57</sup> Judge Böckenförde furthermore argued in his dissenting opinion that the costs of an abortion after counselling and in the early phase of pregnancy could well be borne by health insurance because he did not support the view presented in the judgement that social security benefits for such abortions are not available by constitution.<sup>58</sup>

The Court's idea about the manner of the counselling sessions, as set out in the judgement, makes a third line of reasoning obvious and mirrors a gendered preconception about women's nature and duties. The proposed counselling concept "requires a framework that creates positive conditions for the woman's action in favour of the unborn life."<sup>59</sup> This means that the counselling was to be carried out not to inform the woman but "in order to win her over to carrying the child to the full term,"<sup>60</sup> thus not forcing the woman to continue the pregnancy, but strongly encouraging her nonetheless. This is reinforced by the choice of words – the Court referred to the foetus as "unborn human life"<sup>61</sup> and to abortion as "killing the unborn child."<sup>62</sup> This can be regarded as an attempt to humanize the otherwise abstract legal terminology and to appeal to the conscience of the

<sup>53</sup> Rodríguez-Ruiz, 'Gender in Constitutional Discourses on Abortion: Looking at Spain from a Comparative Perspective', 701.

<sup>54</sup> Constitutional Court, 'Schwangerschaftsabbruch II, Ref. No. 2 BvF 2/90, 2 BvF 4/90, 2 BvF 5/92 (BVerfGE 88, 203-366)', recital 4.

<sup>55</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 7.

<sup>56</sup> Constitutional Court, paragraph 384.

<sup>57</sup> Constitutional Court, paragraph 390.

<sup>58</sup> Constitutional Court, paragraph 424.

<sup>59</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 12.

<sup>60</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 11.

<sup>61</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 5.

<sup>62</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 5.

“mother,”<sup>63</sup> as the Court refers to the pregnant woman. The reasoning as a whole shows how the life of the foetus takes precedence over the pregnant woman’s rights. She is reduced to her role as a mother and her capability of bearing children.

In their dissenting opinion, the judges Mahrenholz and Sommer again disagreed with the understanding of a woman’s role as presented in the judgement. In contrast, they argued that the duty to protect required the state to head the “duality in unity” by treating the woman not only as the “vessel of the embryo.”<sup>64</sup> In the early phase of pregnancy, the state could only provide protection for the foetus by winning the woman as its ally. This presupposes taking her seriously in her ability to make responsible decisions.<sup>65</sup>

The judgement paved the way for a new law following the Western German guidelines, set out by the Constitutional Court in 1975, thus not taking into account the more liberal approach of the GDR.<sup>66</sup> In 1995, finally, the Bundestag passed a new law that was basically the initially proposed one with minor modifications, and that applies until today. Abortion in Germany is therefore criminalized but not prosecuted if it is carried out during the first trimester of the pregnancy and if the woman receives pre-birth counselling.<sup>67</sup>

## 4.2 The Polish Constitutional Tribunal’s judgement in 1997

In 1932, Poland was the second country in the world after the Soviet Union, which legalized abortion if the woman’s health or life was in danger, and if the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest.<sup>68</sup> The law was expanded in 1956 to include medical and social reasons, including “difficult living conditions of the woman,” thus leaving the access to abortion virtually unrestricted.<sup>69</sup> This changed with the end of the Communist era. After the secularism imposed by the Soviets had come to an end, the Roman Catholic Church gained influence, and abortion legislation became extremely controversial. In 1990, access to abortion was drastically restricted after the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, and in 1993 a very restrictive law was enacted which removed social reasons as legal ground for

<sup>63</sup> Constitutional Court, recital 3.

<sup>64</sup> Constitutional Court, paragraph 388.

<sup>65</sup> Constitutional Court, paragraph 404.

<sup>66</sup> Eva Maleck-Lewy and Myra Marx Ferree, ‘Talking about Women and Wombs: Discourse about Abortion and Reproductive Rights in the GDR during and after the “Wende”’, in *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics and Everyday Life after Socialism*, ed. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 100.

<sup>67</sup> Federal Ministry of Justice, ‘Deutsches Strafgesetzbuch (StGB) [German Criminal Code]’, November 1998, §218a, accessed 12 January 2020, <https://www.gesetze-im-inter-net.de/gg/BJNR000010949.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> Julia Hussein et al., ‘Abortion in Poland’, *Reproductive Health Matters* 26, no. 52 (2018): 11.

<sup>69</sup> Wanda Stojanowska, ‘Poland: The Abortion Dilemma’, *Journal of Family Law* 30, no. 2 (1991): 382.

abortion and applies until today. It became known as the ‘abortion compromise,’ but above all as a solution that was acceptable to the Polish Catholic Church.<sup>70</sup> Under the new law, abortions could be performed only if there was a serious threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman, in cases of rape or incest, and in cases in which antenatal tests demonstrated that the foetus was seriously and irreversibly damaged<sup>71</sup> – “The Church wins, women lose,”<sup>72</sup> as feminist scholar and activist Ann Snitow observed at the time.

1993 was also the year of parliamentary elections, resulting in a new, left-leaning government replacing the former right-wing coalition. From the beginning, efforts to liberalize legislation on abortion were made. These efforts led to social reasons – difficult life conditions and economic hardship – being reintroduced as a legal basis for abortion in 1996, as long as the termination of pregnancy was conducted during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and as long as the woman had received counselling before.<sup>73</sup> This new liberal approach brought those opposed to abortion onto the scene again. The Catholic Church, which had become a major political player in Poland and exercised considerable influence on abortion legislation from 1989 on,<sup>74</sup> too, reacted strongly against the amendment and described it as “not only anti-Christian, but anti-Polish and inhumane as well.”<sup>75</sup> It referred to a termination of pregnancy as ‘infanticide’ and started to frame abortion in nationalist terms, drawing on the Pope John Paul II’s words: “The nation which kills its own children is a nation without a future.”<sup>76</sup> The heated public debate resulted in the 1996 amendment being brought before the Constitutional Tribunal.<sup>77</sup>

In 1997, the Tribunal ruled in an exceptionally long judgement, accompanied by three strongly worded dissenting opinions,<sup>78</sup> that social reasons as legal ground for abortion were unconstitutional “as it violates the protection of human life at

<sup>70</sup> Szelewa, ‘Killing “Unborn Children”? The Catholic Church and Abortion Law in Poland Since 1989’, 742.

<sup>71</sup> Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, ‘Attitudes toward Abortion in Poland and the United States’, *Social Science Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (1997): 908.

<sup>72</sup> Ann Snitow, ‘Poland’s Abortion Law: The Church Wins, Women Lose’, *Nation* 256, no. 16 (1993): 556.

<sup>73</sup> Szelewa, ‘Killing “Unborn Children”? The Catholic Church and Abortion Law in Poland Since 1989’, 751.

<sup>74</sup> Szelewa, 748–49.

<sup>75</sup> Szelewa, 751.

<sup>76</sup> Anne-Marie Kramer, ‘Gender, Nation and the Abortion Debate in the Polish Media’, in *Nation and Gender in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Vera Tolz and Stephenie Booth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 135.

<sup>77</sup> Szelewa, ‘Killing “Unborn Children”? The Catholic Church and Abortion Law in Poland Since 1989’, 752.

<sup>78</sup> Wojciech Sadurski, *Rights Before Courts: A Study of Constitutional Courts in Postcommunist States of Central and Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 138.



any stage of its development.”<sup>79</sup> Even though it acknowledged that the “binding Polish constitutional regulations do not contain any provision that would directly address the protection of life,”<sup>80</sup> it held that “the rule of law is respect for the value, i.e. human life from its outset.” It concluded that “human life, including life at the prenatal stage of development, cannot be subject to any differentiation,”<sup>81</sup> and that the “health of a conceived child and its undisturbed development”<sup>82</sup> needed to be protected. The mentioning of “health” and “undisturbed development” is especially telling because it means that the Tribunal’s discourse constructed a presumption of foetal personhood and the foetus as subject of the state and social welfare goods.<sup>83</sup> In this sense, the reasoning was not so much about non-legal arguments on the value of life but about the unborn child being a legal person, whose assertion of rights is considered directly linked to the rule of law and does thus become a crucial marker of a genuine democracy.<sup>84</sup>

Since the Polish Tribunal decided on the amendment of the existing law with regard to social reasons as legal ground for abortion, it did not elaborate upon other circumstances. However, the Tribunal’s judgement allows for “prenatal examinations for eugenics determinations,”<sup>85</sup> which it considered excluded from the “prohibition to violate the bodily integrity of a foetus or to disturb its development processes.”<sup>86</sup> Apart from that, the pregnant woman cannot herself decide to abort her child because “it is not possible to decide on having a child in a situation when that child is already developing at the prenatal stage”<sup>87</sup> – in this sense she already *has* it. Moreover, the “mother of a conceived child is guilty”<sup>88</sup> should she act “in a way that violates the interests of a child.”<sup>89</sup> These arguments are framed in confrontational terms, which becomes more obvious with the Tribunal drawing on the foetus’s property rights, noting that abortion deprives the unborn child “of the ability to claim redress of damage suffered before birth against a mother.”<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, ‘Decision Ref. No. K 26/96’, 28 May 1997, paragraph 1, accessed 12 January 2020, [https://www.law.utoronto.ca/utfl\\_file/count/documents/reprohealth/poland\\_1997\\_decision\\_english.pdf](https://www.law.utoronto.ca/utfl_file/count/documents/reprohealth/poland_1997_decision_english.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>81</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>82</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, paragraph 6.

<sup>83</sup> Holc, ‘The Purest Democrat: Fetal Citizenship and Subjectivity in the Construction of Democracy in Poland’, 755.

<sup>84</sup> Holc, 755.

<sup>85</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, ‘Decision Ref. No. K 26/96’, Reasoning.

<sup>86</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>87</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>88</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>89</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>90</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

This ability is, in the Tribunal's view, "the only real instrument ensuring the protection of the interests of a foetus in relation to its mother under civil law."<sup>91</sup> The foetus's civil rights are mentioned at this point, again disclosing an understanding of the foetus as legal subject of the state, or even as an unborn citizen.<sup>92</sup> The Tribunal thus assumed that the unborn child deserved legal protection, and that this protection must be enforced even against the will of the mother because it "is not the individual right of a child's mother"<sup>93</sup> to decide on having an abortion.

This argument connects to the third line of discourse which relates to a gendered preconception of a woman's nature and duties. The term 'mother'<sup>94</sup> is not used to elaborate on a status or to enable the pregnant woman to claim any rights, she is merely reduced to being the mother of a subject of the state. As was the case in the German ruling, the choice of words deviates from a legal terminology – the Tribunal not only referred to the pregnant woman as 'mother,' the reasoning moreover pivoted on the "conceived child ... a completely defenceless creature who, however, is able to feel pain." In doing so, while mobilizing district legal discourses on the one hand, the Tribunal, on the other, uses a language that had been introduced into the debate on abortion by the Church – it further refers to abortion as "[killing] a foetus."<sup>95</sup>

This means that "the limitation of rights and freedoms of a pregnant woman as resulting from the origination of new obligations cannot, as such, justify taking the life of a conceived child"<sup>96</sup> – it is thus considered the natural way of life that women's rights are curbed when they become a mother. Consequently, the Tribunal held that abortion undermined "motherhood,"<sup>97</sup> which it defined as union and "necessary relationship between mother and child."<sup>98</sup> Motherhood and family are values that are protected under the Polish Constitution, which is why the "deprivation of the protection of the [conceived] child is equivalent to the deprivation of the legal defence of the family."<sup>99</sup> In this sense, not only the rule of rule is

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<sup>91</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>92</sup> Holc, 'The Purest Democrat: Fetal Citizenship and Subjectivity in the Construction of Democracy in Poland', 755.

<sup>93</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, 'Decision Ref. No. K 26/96', Reasoning.

<sup>94</sup> I worked with the English translation of the judgement and reasoning, which means that there is the possibility of differences between the translation and the Polish original document.

<sup>95</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, 'Decision Ref. No. K 26/96', Reasoning. The choice of words is not only relevant, but of prime importance at this point. Since I have not worked with the original, I cannot be sure of the connotation in Polish. In German, for example, the word 'Mord' is used in this context by abortion opponents sometimes, which is then an explicit reference to homicide in the legal sense.

<sup>96</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>97</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>98</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

<sup>99</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, Reasoning.

endangered because of abortion, but also does abortion disrupt the seemingly natural identity categories like motherhood and family that are regarded as the corner stone of society.<sup>100</sup>

As a result, the liberalization of the legislation on abortion failed. Instead, the events since have indicated a development in the opposite direction – the conscience clause, which grants doctors the right to refuse to perform an abortion if it is inconsistent with their conscience – was further tightened. Before, these doctors were obliged to direct the pregnant women to another doctor or clinic, but the Constitutional Court ruled in 2015 that this restricted the doctor's freedom of conscience.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, some members of the *Sejm*, the lower house of Polish parliament, submitted a motion to the Constitutional Tribunal in 2017, hoping for a ruling that would ban abortion on the grounds of serious damage of the foetus because of non-compliance with the constitution.<sup>102</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

In the abortion debate, women's autonomy and bodily integrity are at stake, which contests women's equal citizenship<sup>103</sup> and gender equality.<sup>104</sup> The analysis has shown how both the German and the Polish court focussed in their reasoning on the protection of the foetus, which took precedence over any rights to self-determination of women. This held true for both legal and non-legal arguments.

The German reasoning showed how gender can be used in a non-legal discourse pivoting on the dignity of human life to frame a constitutional discourse on abortion. Confrontational arguments were used to articulate the pregnant woman as a potential adversary of the foetus that needed to be protected against the former's arbitrariness and unnatural behaviour, which are, in the Court's view, at the core of a woman's decision to not accept her maternal duties.

In the Polish case, even though a foetus's right to life was at the centre of the Tribunal's reasoning, the decision was primarily based on the unborn child being

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<sup>100</sup> Holc, 'The Purest Democrat: Fetal Citizenship and Subjectivity in the Construction of Democracy in Poland', 772.

<sup>101</sup> Constitutional Tribunal, 'Decision Ref. No. K 12/14.', 7 October 2015.

<sup>102</sup> Group of Deputies to the Sejm of the 8th Term, 'Application for Declaration of Non-Compliance of a Normative Act With the Constitution of the Polish Republic', 27 October 2017, accessed 12 January 2020, [http://ipo.trybunal.gov.pl/ipo/dok?dok=F1326803962%2FK\\_13\\_17\\_wns\\_2017\\_06\\_22\\_ADO.pdf](http://ipo.trybunal.gov.pl/ipo/dok?dok=F1326803962%2FK_13_17_wns_2017_06_22_ADO.pdf).

<sup>103</sup> Nancy J. Hirschmann, 'Stem Cells, Disability, and Abortion: A Feminist Approach to Equal Citizenship', in *Gender Equality: Dimensions of Women's Equal Citizenship*, ed. Joanna L. Grossman and Linda C. McClain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 155.

<sup>104</sup> Alison M. Jaggar, 'Abortion Rights and Gender Justice Worldwide: An Essay in Political Philosophy', in *Abortion. Three Perspectives*, ed. Michael Tooley et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 152.

entitled to the constitutional protection of its health, life and civil rights. The Tribunal's discourse thus constructed the foetus as a legal subject of the state. Either way, both the German and the Polish courts' arguments and choice of words disclosed a gendered preconception of a woman's role and, consequently, a heteronormative understanding of the family that needs to be protected. Along the courts' line of argumentation, a woman's primary duty and natural destiny is to bear children and care for them. Should she not want to act accordingly, the state has to intervene and protect the foetus against her, which means her rights are of secondary importance in this respect.

Since sexual and reproductive rights, understood as private 'liberties' and 'choices,' are meaningless without enabling conditions through which they can be realised, the equal citizenship of women is fiercely contested in the abortion debate. In the two judgements, women are not understood as reproductive right holders and are denied the right to autonomy and bodily integrity, which means that they are not presented as equal citizens anymore as soon as they are pregnant. Instead, based on a dichotomous gendered citizenship model, they are infantilized by a discourse which presents them as subjects of an authority.

Training the lens on women's equal citizenship in the debate on abortion has thus revealed a great gap in the struggle for gender equality. As long as there is an understanding of women's role and citizenship duties that stands in the way of their autonomy and thus in the way of further strengthening their reproductive rights, there might be the risk of not only not moving forward, but of going backwards. Poland, which has been repeatedly criticized for its very restrictive legislation on abortion,<sup>105</sup> shows signs of such a development. In Germany, too, the debate on abortion is ongoing because the ban on advertisement for abortion, existing since Nazi times, hinders women from finding the information they need to obtain safe care. In order to remove the barriers that women encounter when they seek an abortion, further action is needed, and further research can be the basis for that. Where the narrative that dominates both analysed judgements and reasonings stems from, for example, leaves space for such.

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<sup>105</sup> Council of Europe, 'Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Europe' (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017), 33.

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# New Media platforms and the re-imagination of transnational solidarity

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## 1 Introduction

The process of digitization, in which different digital transformations of forms of representation and interaction are recombined on a single “platform” (the internet) allows the creation of new digital resources, and the adaptation of digital technologies across different social and personal activities.<sup>1</sup> Technology thus, has become an important element in the development of society,<sup>2</sup> due to the extensive use of the internet and the much-celebrated interactivity of it, that allow users not only to participate passively but to actively reshape and modify both content and form.<sup>3</sup>

Over the past two decades the Internet has to a greater extent become an important element of everyone’s life; people use the internet with different purposes, from daily tasks to social interactions, communication, and entertainment.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, recalling the thoughts of Newcomb and Hirsch, *the internet has been taking*

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<sup>1</sup> Alan C. Kay and Adina Goldberg. “Personal dynamic media”. In *The Handbook of Internet Studies, Handbooks in Communication and Media*. Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess, eds., (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess, eds., *The Handbook of Internet Studies, Handbooks in Communication and Media* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Schroeder, “The Internet in Theory,” in *Social Theory after the Internet, Media, Technology, and Globalization* (UCL Press, 2018), 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt20krxdr.4>.

*over the role of being the most widely shared cultural forum, in which public issues can be articulated and negotiated.*<sup>5</sup> Due to its versatility, we can find new internet platforms that are created every day to expand the levels of communication on a transnational level, giving a new dimension to the sense of community, social movements and solidarity.<sup>6</sup> In this context new media platforms are relevant for the research due to their improvement and stimulation of communication and participation, moreover, new media platforms facilitate visibility and the creation of transnational relationships.

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze how new media platforms influence the process of re-imagining transnational solidarity. This study aims to answer the questions of how solidarity is re-imagined on new media platforms such as Reddit, and how the production of certain narratives influences the way we perceive solidarity in projects like Movember. The question and key topics of the research tackle one of the sub-themes of this year's Intensive Program, the discursive construction of inequality and solidarity, particularly the discursive construction of solidarity, through the implementation of new social practices that give space to new media platforms to re-imagine the means of it.

The motivation to research this topic arises from the impact of the increasing digitization of the world, and how notions such as space, distance and time become blurred once they are seen through the eyes of internet platforms,<sup>7</sup> whereby digital spaces provide new opportunities and possibilities to participate actively in campaigns all around the world.<sup>8</sup> Digital technologies influence every aspect of daily life, due to the high levels of technological innovation and the circulation of information and communication technology, this improvements in information technology gave raise to the development of digital participation, in which participants not only have access to information, but also services and content,<sup>9</sup> having the opportunity to create, share and comment on a variety of topics.

Digital participation is actively used in new media platforms in search of wider social, economic and cultural benefits. Popularly employed by the government, businesses, charities and social movements, new media platforms and dig-

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<sup>5</sup> Newcomb, & Hirsch. "Television as a cultural forum: Implications for research". In *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, Handbooks in Communication and Media. Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess, eds., (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Dwaine Plaza and Amy Below, "Social Media as a Tool for Transnational Caregiving within the Caribbean Diaspora," *Social and Economic Studies* 63, no. 1 (2014): 25–56.

<sup>7</sup> Consalvo and Ess, *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Frida Leander, "New Media Activism – What Are We Talking About?," #NewMediaActivism (blog), September 18, 2017, <http://wpmu.mah.se/nmict172group5/2017/09/18/new-media-activism-what-are-we-talking-about/>.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Seifert and Jörg Rössel, "Digital Participation," in *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Aging*, ed. Danan Gu and Matthew E. Dupre (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1–5, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2\\_1017-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2_1017-1).

ital participation have become a more inclusive medium for participation, communication and support.<sup>10</sup> The use of new media platforms to engage in political and social activism has increase in the last decade, consequently, the effectiveness and viability of such mediums play an important role in the creation of sustained movements for social change.<sup>11</sup> Between the diversity of social movements and campaigns that are widely spread through new media platforms for the purpose of this research, I would like to focus on the Movember campaign.

The Movember campaign started after the creation of the Movember foundation charity in 2004 in Australia. The name Movember comes from the combination of ‘mo’ a slang for moustache popularly used in Australia and November, the month in which Movember is celebrated. The campaign is an annual event that encourages the grow of moustaches during the month of November, to show support towards the men’s health crisis that isn’t being talked about. As specify in the official Movember website, “Movember is the only charity tackling men’s health on a global scale, year around. Movember addresses some of the biggest health issues faced by men; prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health and suicide prevention.”<sup>12</sup> The moustache during the Movember campaign becomes a symbol that incites conversation and with this the creation of awareness and the possibility of participation. The aim of the campaign is to gather donations with the purpose of funding projects dedicated to save and improve the lives of men all around the world.

Recognizing the lack of awareness about particular issues that men face,<sup>13</sup> I consider it relevant to talk about the Movember campaign since its main focus is to create and spread consciousness about men’s mental and physical problems and to forge a sense of community and brotherhood between members.<sup>14</sup>

To answer the research question, I will use Critical Discourse Analysis to study posts on Reddit. The material will be chosen based on the topic of Movember and their popularity on the platform (posts that have the most upvotes), gen-

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<sup>10</sup> Karel Verhaeghe, “How to Make Digital Participation Inclusive?,” CitizenLab (blog), November 11, 2018, <https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-tech/how-to-make-digital-participation-inclusive/>.

<sup>11</sup> Monica Anderson et al., “Activism in the Social Media Age,” Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech (blog), July 11, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/07/11/activism-in-the-social-media-age/>.

<sup>12</sup> “Movember,” Movember, accessed December 3, 2019, <https://de.movember.com/en/en/about/foundation>.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Baker et al., “The Men’s Health Gap: Men Must Be Included in the Global Health Equity Agenda,” World Health Organization, accessed May 20, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2471/BLT.13.132795>.

<sup>14</sup> Nick Bennett, “More Than Movember: The Critical State Of Men’s Mental Health,” Forbes, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickbennett1/2018/11/01/more-than-movember-the-critical-state-of-mens-mental-health/>.

erally the posts that were found to be the most popular, were posts that approached the topic of Movember with an original or humorous perspective, being more notorious and remarkable. I would like to focus on a platform like Reddit because of their popularity<sup>15</sup> and therefore strength it has to create a sense of community.<sup>16</sup> Reflecting further, the purpose of the research will be to look at the different narratives that are created on Reddit and how they relate to the topic of Movember, thus producing a sense of unity and allowing the re-imagination of solidarity, giving a perspective on how new media platforms offer new environments for the transmission of ideas and the creation of new means for solidarity.

The research question will be approached using literature related to Critical Discourse Analysis. In particular, the work of Wodak *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* and Van Leeuwen *Discourse and Practice* will be considered to study the discourses used in the posts, notions like social practice, rationalization and recontextualization will be applied. Other important literature related to media communication, media ecosystems, solidarity and the analysis of the use of Reddit will be relevant during the research. The work of authors like Bergstrom, Chouliaraki, Consalvo and Ess, Della Porta and Diani, Hanna, Hawkins, Lievrouw and Livingstone, Mechtrood, Schiermer and Shroeder will be suitable throughout the research. Additional literature related to the Movember movement, its media and the creation of awareness and solidarity will be significant and properly used for cohesive paper development. I will also employ previous work considering the importance of new media in social movements and how hashtags or posts have become part of a new form of activism and support.

The research will start with the theoretical and conceptual framework, outlining the key concepts and main ideas that will be used during the analysis, notions like social movements, new media platforms, digitalization and their connection with solidarity will be explained. After that will follow a chapter dedicated to the methodology used to conduct the analysis, the way it is applied and its relevance on the research, also, a clear description of Reddit and its significance for the research will be put into words. Consequently, the analysis of the posts will be made and discussed including the selection of the corpus, the corpus, the steps of the analysis and the analysis of the post, followed by the conclusion and final remarks of the research.

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<sup>15</sup> Chuong Nguyen, "Reddit Is the Third-Most-Popular Destination on the Internet," Digital Trends, May 30, 2018, <https://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/reddit-more-popular-than-facebook-in-2018/>.

<sup>16</sup> David Spinks, "How Reddit Built a Successful Online Community: A Case Study," CMX (blog), June 9, 2014, <https://cmxhub.com/erik-martin-reddit-community-interview/>.

## 2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The research is primarily concerned with social movements, which, according to the definition provided by Diani, are an organized and deliberate group working with a common objective. Generally, a social movement aims to create change, resist change or give voice.<sup>17</sup> The research takes as an example Movember, a campaign that takes place every year during the month of November and calls on males to let their moustaches grow as a sign of support for male health awareness. During this month, many campaigns are run looking to raise funds and educate people about prostate cancer, testicular cancer, male mental health and male suicide amongst others.

New media platforms and digitization are concepts that during the last few decades have given rise to new perspectives to the way social movements work and how solidarity takes on new means.<sup>18</sup> The study of the digitization of the Movember campaign, and how different platforms are used to spread awareness and initiate a conversation about male health frames the analysis of this paper. The sense of community and the incentive to communicate highlight the importance of new media platforms and the significance of solidarity in a highly digitized world.

In this chapter the relation between social movements and new media platforms will be explored in more depth and the meaning of the re-contextualization of solidarity will be explained, making clear the key concepts necessary for the analysis.

### 2.1 New Media Platforms and Social Movements

For the purpose of this research we will define new media platforms taking into account the work of Lievrouw and Livingstone and their understanding of new media as, *information and communication technologies and their social contexts, which includes: the material artifacts, the communication activities or practices and the social arrangements that people create around the artifacts and practices*.<sup>19</sup> Based on this definition new media platforms can be explained as operating systems that facilitate the existence and development of new media and integrate the ongoing process of fusion and recombination of technologies.

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<sup>17</sup> Mario Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement," *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 1 (February 1992): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb02943.x>.

<sup>18</sup> Julia Andén, "Is New Media Activism an Illusion of New Solidarity?," #NewMediaActivism (blog), September 21, 2017, <http://wpmu.mah.se/nmict172group5/2017/09/21/is-new-media-activism-an-illusion-of-new-solidarity/>.

<sup>19</sup> Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone, "Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Social Consequences of ICTs, Updated Student Edition" (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446211304.n1>.

The importance of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been changing greatly during the last three decades. These years have testified the propagation and junction of various networked media and different information technologies that have come to the creation of new modes and genres of communication and have helped in redefining the ways people engage with media.<sup>20</sup> As pointed out by Lievrouw, the new kinds of audiences that media allows are not only consumers but also users and participants that co-created complex ecologies of diversities, communities and networks. This in turn produced new opportunities for interaction and expression particularly between artists, activists and other political and cultural groups, which find in the capacities of new media the necessary tools for their own expression and the opportunity to gain visibility and voice.<sup>21</sup>

New media platforms facilitate and improve the role of computer mediated communication, which represents a form of communication that does not fit conventional distinctions between public and private.<sup>22</sup> CMC works as an instrument that facilitates collective communication, improving it and allowing the re-imagination of a collective identity and new means of solidarity. As discussed by Mario Diani, the most relevant contribution of CMC and this variety of new media platforms to social movements seems to be more instrumental than symbolic. The presence of different kinds of bonds that link transnational communities and this newfound solidarity creates a more active “mobilization” thanks in part to the new elements and platforms for CMC, that allows the creation of new kinds of social ties.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2 Social Movements as a Social Practice: Re-contextualization of Solidarity

The notion of solidarity, taking as a basis the initial contribution of Durkheim, can be understood as the social unity of a group and seeks to answer the question of “*what is that thing which keeps a group together and makes them cooperate – makes them act as a unit in which they combine their efforts?*”<sup>24</sup> in the search for an answer, the effect of symbolic representations was the center of what create unity. Going further in the notions of mechanical and organic solidarity, the relation between society and individual played an important role, characterizing mechanical solidarity by the integration based on the homogeneity of individuals

<sup>20</sup> Leah Lievrouw, *Alternative and Activist New Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 1–27.

<sup>21</sup> Lievrouw, 1–27.

<sup>22</sup> Mario Diani, “Social Movement Networks Virtual and Real,” *Information, Communication & Society* 3, no. 3 (January 1, 2000): 386, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180051033333>.

<sup>23</sup> Diani, “Social Movement Networks Virtual and Real.”

<sup>24</sup> Sister Mechtraud, “Durkheim’s Concept of Solidarity,” *Philippine Sociological Review* 3, no. 3 (1955): 23–27.

and the idea of the “conscience collective” in which common ways of thinking and feeling is what binds the members of society together,<sup>25</sup> thus the individual has its own mind but acts depending of the collective identity, while organic solidarity is characterized by the interdependence and complementarities between people based on the social cohesion that is developed due to the reliance on each other.<sup>26</sup> Considering these notions and understanding solidarity described by Durkheim as a social fact involving beliefs, practices and norms, we will then shift the context and see solidarity as a social practice, changing the initial question from *what* to – *how does a group maintain itself together and how do they cooperate with each other?*.

With the invention of the internet and the development of multiple forms of media and different platforms that allow the interaction of people all around the world, solidarity has been re-contextualized, changing not the meaning of it but the means for its action.<sup>27</sup> In modern days the increasing technologization allowed a restructuration of the communication defined by the development of self-expression through new media platforms characterized by the absence of normative morality<sup>28</sup>, meaning with this, that changes on the way of communication and interaction imply changes in the way communities are constructed and solidarity is expressed.

### 3 Methodology

After discussing the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research, we can move forward to the next step to approach the analysis, the methodology. To study the posts, two kinds of analysis will be used, discourse analysis and visual analysis.

Based on Theo van Leeuwen’s notion of discourse as *a form of action and something people do to other people, for other people and with each other*<sup>29</sup>, the notion of discourse as a social practice, that involves, social actors (participants), actions, representations, mediatization and meaning will be applied. Van Leeuwen, referring to the work of Max Weber, described the use of “rationalization” as a form of social organization where action (social action) is no longer oriented

<sup>25</sup> M. J. Hawkins, “Continuity and Change in Durkheim’s Theory of Social Solidarity,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1979): 155–64.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Evans and Art Evans, “An Examination of the Concept ‘Social Solidarity,’” *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 2, no. 1 (1977): 29–46.

<sup>27</sup> Omkumar Krishnan, “Beyond National Boundaries: Towards an Internet Society,” *Sociological Bulletin* 48, no. 1/2 (1999): 275–83.

<sup>28</sup> Reviewed Stijn Joye, “Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*,” n.d., 3.

<sup>29</sup> Theo Van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*, Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3–22.

towards principles, meanings or ideas, but rather towards plans of action, strategically designed for the purpose of the action that is carried out more adequately and effectively.<sup>30</sup> Social action thus, is no longer looking to answer the question of “*Is it good?*”, but rather the questions of “*Does it achieve its purpose?*”, and more importantly, “*How does it achieve its purpose?*”. Consequently, rationalized social interactions no longer function with a unified representation (imagination) of solidarity; instead they function with common practices that redefine and re-imagine the means of solidarity. It is this which binds members of a society together, thus creating a community.

The focus of the study will be the participants’ actions in relation to the topic of Movember. The use of discourse analysis to study digital media, and in this particular case posts in a media platform where people anonymously post, comment and interact, giving users a space to express their ideas and opinions about any kind of topic,<sup>31</sup> is relevant, considering that in the words of van Leeuwen, *texts should be studied as representations as well as interactions*,<sup>32</sup> the research thus opens up a space to analyze how society is constituted, signaled and legitimized through discourse.<sup>33</sup> As explained by Van Leeuwen, the use of certain discourses to communicate and participate in different circles of society, make language and the way we use it an important aspect of socialization and construction of ideas, considering, that in the way we communicate we express our political or social commitment in the construction of our reality<sup>34</sup>.

Using discourse analysis, I will study how language is used in the posts and their comments to see how certain discourses are created around the topic of Movember and how people come to be part of the chain of participation and the creation of community.<sup>35</sup> The notion of discourse as an instrument of power and of the social construction of reality is used to conduct the analysis in the Movember campaign and the posts referring to it. There are different elements of discourse that will be analyzed, in particular words that indicate purpose for the action and how they relate with the construction of community, and with this, how the discourse makes relevant the interaction on a platform as a social practice and

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<sup>30</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice*, 3–22.

<sup>31</sup> Tim Squirrel, “Reddit Is the Best Social Media Site Because It Gets Community Right,” Quartz, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://qz.com/1309562/reddit-is-the-best-social-media-site-because-it-gets-community-right/>.

<sup>32</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, Introducing Qualitative Methods* (London ; Thousand Oaks [Calif.]: SAGE, 2001), 1–12.

<sup>34</sup> Theo Van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*, Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Squirrel, “Reddit Is the Best Social Media Site Because It Gets Community Right.”



the creation of a “social bond”<sup>36</sup>, addressing solidarity through categorization<sup>37</sup>, pointing out the function that they share with each other, and how they achieve it. In analyzing posts on Reddit, I will focus on the topic of Movember as it is linked with the idea of solidarity and concepts like charity, support, awareness, respect and some of the terms used to define the Movember campaign such as moustache, facial hair, men’s health, prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health, these particular terms are chosen because of their affinity to ideas of a shared purpose and with this definition of solidarity. The use of discourse analysis will allow me to identify the discursive construction of narratives of solidarity related to men’s health on new media platforms.

Based on Van Leeuwen’s notion that, *visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction*.<sup>38</sup> and using Barthes and Heath’s book *Image, Music, Text*<sup>39</sup> and the work on van Leeuwen and Kress, *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design*<sup>40</sup> as a theoretical framework, I will use visual analysis to have a more in-depth understanding of the posts, since most of the selected posts have an image as the center. Moreover, the use of visual analysis is relevant because it would allow the description and discussion of the image, the understanding of how it is put together and later on the analysis of the effectiveness of the picture as symbolic element for the Movember campaign, the popularity of the post and the importance of collectiveness, participation and unity. The elements of the design and the focal point are the main visual elements that will be described and that will be taken into account in the analysis, in this way it is possible to understand how the attention of the reader is drawn to one thing rather than another and the purpose of the picture.<sup>41</sup>

The choice to work with this platform (Reddit) specifically is based on its particularities and the differences it has when compared to other platforms. Reddit, the self-described, front page of the internet, is a collection of forums where people can create an account and participate by sharing news, content or comments. It offers an interactive platform, where anonymity is one of the defining characteristics.<sup>42</sup> The lack of a defined “identity” gives users room for a more open and free opinion, it enables people to share without fear of backlash for content that can be seen all around the world, bringing more outlooks from

<sup>36</sup> Gunther R. Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2. ed., reprinted (London: Routledge, 2010), 118.

<sup>37</sup> Theo Van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice*, 40.

<sup>38</sup> Gunther R. Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2. ed., reprinted (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1987).

<sup>40</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, *Reading Images*.

<sup>41</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, 1–15.

<sup>42</sup> Will Nicol, “What Is Reddit? A Beginner’s Guide to the Front Page of the Internet,” Digital Trends, July 19, 2018, <https://www.digitaltrends.com/web/what-is-reddit/>.

broader demographics that would otherwise possibly not contribute.<sup>43</sup> On Reddit the user has the option to share content on a large scale and is encouraged to participate; upvoting, downvoting, commenting and creating new posts about different topics. The singularity of this platform supports differences between the kind of audience that participates in it, making the study of its discourse and interaction beneficial for the understanding of their own narrative and the different uses of the platform in comparison with others.

Following this idea and taking into account the different elements of social practices and the relation between them, the research of Reddit and how it works as a platform for the re-imagination of solidarity will be conducted.

## 4 Analysis

### 4.1 Selection of the corpus

For the purposes of this research, different posts related to Movember on Reddit were selected, based initially on the knowledge that there is a subreddit dedicated specifically to Movember (r/movember<sup>44</sup>) that was created over 10 years ago. The initial idea was thus to analyze a number of posts from that subreddit, but after studying it, it was evident that there is not much participation currently and the most upvoted posts were over 5 years old, making them less relevant for study in present times.

In the process of sorting out and selecting the posts that would be used for the analysis some facts were brought to my attention:

- Most of the posts aimed at raising funds are focused on the USA in the r/Movember subreddit.
- Many posts were published during Movember (November) 2018 on the movember subreddit but they didn't get much traction.
- Main posts sorted by relevance of all time on the home page of reddit are related to the use of the Movember moustache in different products, like video games, NHL cards and funny posts or products produced as Movember limited edition (Oris watch).

Taking this into account, I decided to move to the home page of Reddit<sup>45</sup> and select the top posts related to Movember across the entire website. The criteria to select certain posts over others was based on the quantity of upvotes it had, since those are the ones garnering the most feedback and input. To do this, all the posts were sorted by designations of *top*, (most upvoted) and *all time* (in relation to

<sup>43</sup> Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen* (Simon and Schuster, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> "R/Movember," reddit, accessed May 10, 2019, <https://www.reddit.com/r/movember/>.

<sup>45</sup> "Reddit: The Front Page of the Internet," accessed May 10, 2019, <https://www.reddit.com/>.

their date of posting) and the topic of Movember. (Picture below). This allowed me to see which posts were the most interacted with and reduced the quantity of posts.

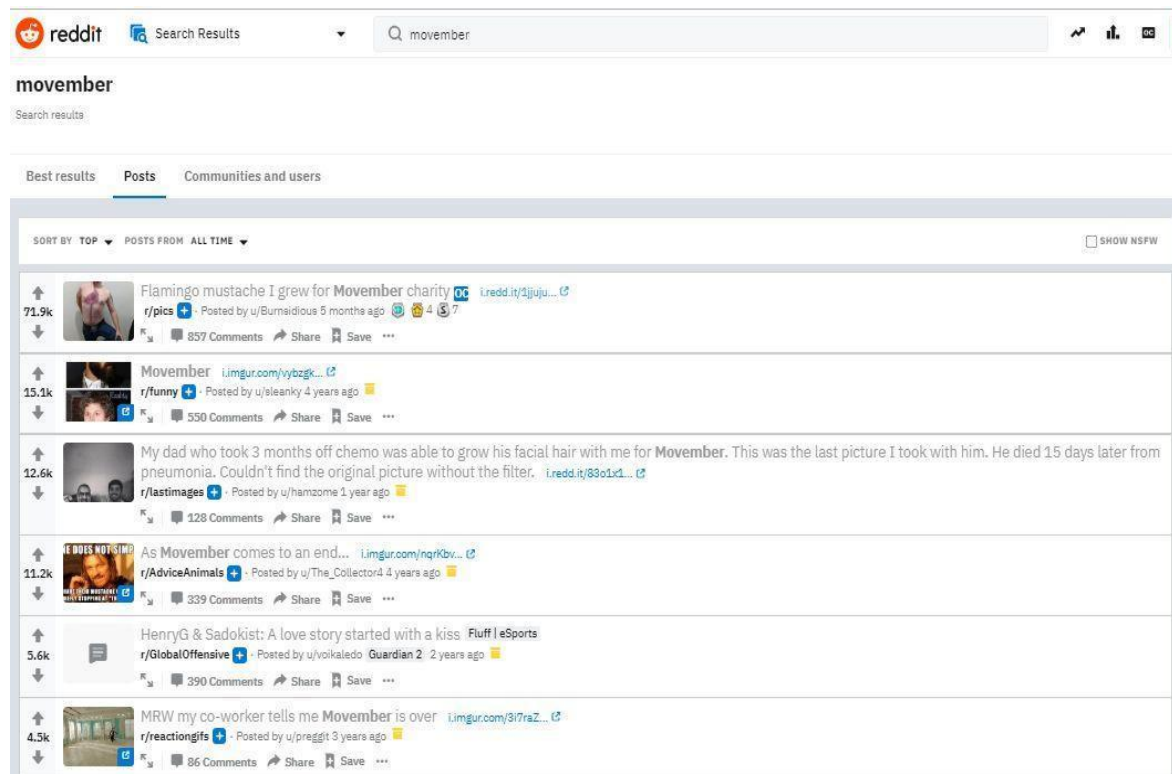


Figure 1

The first five posts after these parameters were established<sup>46</sup>, were selected for the analysis of their discourses as social practice. The first thing that is made evident after sorting the posts is that they range from wildly different subreddits, r/pics, r/funny, r/lastimages, r/AdviceAnimals and r/GlobalOffensive in that order. Out of the ten posts at the top of the results, none of them is from the subreddit dedicated to Movember, nor any other subreddit related to social movements or activism. The variety of their sources and the homogeneity of the topic (Movember) allows discursive, interdiscursive and intertextual analysis of the posts.

## 4.2 Corpus of the Analysis

After sorting the posts, the first six were selected, in respective order:

<sup>46</sup> "Reddit.Com: Search Results - Movember," reddit, accessed May 10, 2019, [https://www.reddit.com/search?q=movember&include\\_over\\_18=on&restrict\\_sr=&t=all&sort=top](https://www.reddit.com/search?q=movember&include_over_18=on&restrict_sr=&t=all&sort=top).

- Flamingo mustache I grew for Movember charity by u/Burnsidious<sup>47</sup>
- Movember by u/sleanky<sup>48</sup>
- My dad who took 3 months off chemo was able to grow his facial hair with me for Movember. This was the last picture I took with him. He died 15 days later from pneumonia. Couldn't find the original picture without the filter by u/hamzone<sup>49</sup>
- As Movember comes to an end... by u/The\_Collector4<sup>50</sup>
- HenryG & Sadokist: A love story started with a kiss by u/voikaledo<sup>51</sup>

### 4.3 Steps of the Analysis

After defining the corpus of the analysis and understanding the methodology, the analysis started by outlining the participants of the social action, which are the Original Poster (OP) and the Commenters. Following that, the actions connected to the comments were divided into four sections determined by the main kinds of actions presented in the comments:

- Questioning: Comments asking for answer, such as, *What is Movember? How does Movember work? Why is the moustache important? How to shave?*
- Criticizing: Comments disapproving or otherwise chastising other comments, OP, the post (picture/video), the campaign or other commenters' pictures, such as, *you are an attention seeker, I hate it, this is ridiculous, Movember is a stupid name, moustaches are horrible.*
- Admiring: Comments appreciating or giving credit, such as, *good work OP, this is majestic, you have a beautiful smile, kappapride, good way of raising funds.*

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<sup>47</sup> "Flamingo Mustache I Grew for Movember Charity," reddit, accessed May 7, 2019, [https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/a2qpm0/flamingo\\_mustache\\_i\\_grew\\_for\\_movember\\_charity/](https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/a2qpm0/flamingo_mustache_i_grew_for_movember_charity/).

<sup>48</sup> "Movember," reddit, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/2lqa8d/movember/>.

<sup>49</sup> "My Dad Who Took 3 Months off Chemo Was Able to Grow His Facial Hair with Me for Movember. This Was the Last Picture I Took with Him. He Died 15 Days Later from Pneumonia. Couldn't Find the Original Picture without the Filter.," reddit, accessed May 9, 2019, [https://www.reddit.com/r/lastimages/comments/6phrs4/my\\_dad\\_who\\_took\\_3\\_months\\_off\\_chemo\\_was\\_able\\_to/](https://www.reddit.com/r/lastimages/comments/6phrs4/my_dad_who_took_3_months_off_chemo_was_able_to/).

<sup>50</sup> "R/AdviceAnimals - As Movember Comes to an End...," reddit, accessed May 27, 2019, [https://www.reddit.com/r/AdviceAnimals/comments/2nw0uq/as\\_movember\\_comes\\_to\\_an\\_end/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AdviceAnimals/comments/2nw0uq/as_movember_comes_to_an_end/).

<sup>51</sup> "R/GlobalOffensive - HenryG & Sadokist: A Love Story Started with a Kiss," reddit, accessed May 27, 2019, [https://www.reddit.com/r/GlobalOffensive/comments/5a7zmy/henryg\\_sadokist\\_a\\_love\\_story\\_started\\_with\\_a\\_kiss/](https://www.reddit.com/r/GlobalOffensive/comments/5a7zmy/henryg_sadokist_a_love_story_started_with_a_kiss/).

- Connecting (Relating): Comments that support the sense of community and allow participants to bind, such as, *thank you, I am sorry, fuck cancer, awareness is necessary, donate to Movember.*

This division has the goal of making the categorization of the topics and analysis of the purpose of the comments easier to study, since in this way it is possible to identify what kind of comments are more frequently used and how with these actions the expression of a community and solidarity is practiced. To clarify, not only the comments related to the topic of Movember were categorized, all the comments in each of the posts were read and sorted out depending of what they were referring to.

After this, the main topics presented in the posts were studied along with the relation between the actions and the performance mode, because it allows us to understand not only what the action is but how the action is executed and what is the purpose of it.

#### 4.4 Analysis of the Posts

The moustache is the tool that sparks a conversation, so the participant can raise awareness of important men's health topics that are often underrepresented in normal discourse. But awareness alone won't help solve male suicide or cure prostate cancer; money raised specifically for these causes will.

u/Volksmarch

#### Flamingo mustache I grew for Movember charity by Burnsidious

- r/pics
- 71.9K Upvotes
- 858 comments
- 5 months ago

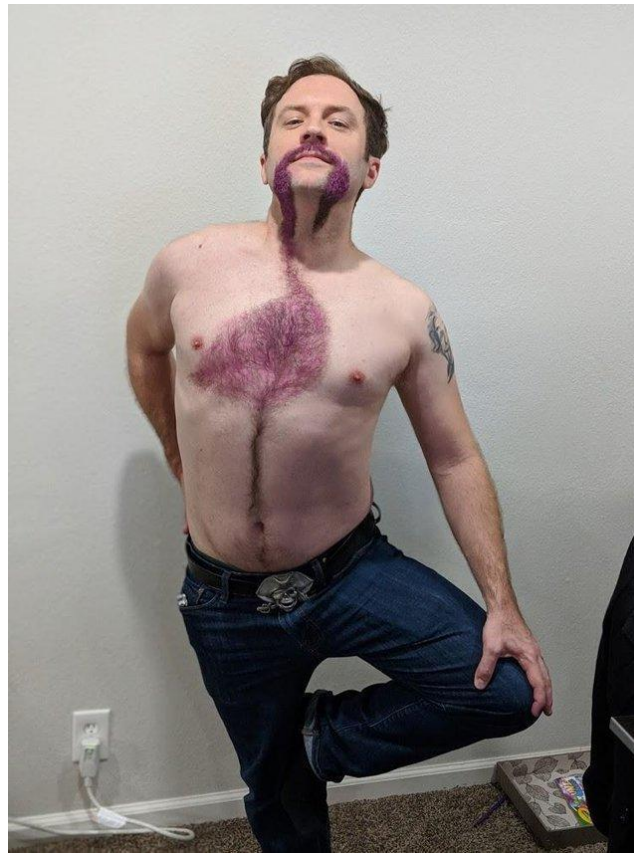


Figure 2

### *The role of the picture*

The picture is the center of the post (the content) and in knowing that the poster is the person in the picture we can understand that OP is taking on the role of sign and sign-maker. He is located in the center of the picture with his head slightly tilted, making his pink moustache the most visible part of his face that mirrors the head and beak of a flamingo. As the focal point of the picture, we see the pink hair on his chest which is moulded into the shape of the body of a flamingo, the neck and legs of the shaped flamingo are also composed by pink hair on his body. The pose of OP mimics the way flamingos stand and from the title of the post we obtain the information that OP has been growing his moustache in solidarity of the Movember campaign and has shaved it and dyed it to represent a flamingo, the pose and the gazing look at the viewer gives the impression of OP demanding to be observed, calling attention to what he is doing and why he is doing it.

Table 1

Participants	OP (Original Poster)	Commenters
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posting</li> <li>• Posing</li> <li>• Growing Moustache</li> <li>• Displaying support</li> <li>• Taking a picture</li> <li>• Participating</li> <li>• Supporting Movember</li> <li>• Linking Movember website</li> <li>• Looking for donations</li> <li>• Spreading a message</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questioning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why? What? How does it help?</li> <li>• How to grow hair?</li> </ul> <p><b>Criticizing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hate</li> <li>• Ridiculous</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Showing off</li> </ul> <p><b>Admiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stepping up Movember</li> <li>• Attraction</li> <li>• Recognizing OP</li> <li>• Majestic/ magnificent</li> <li>• Approving</li> </ul> <p><b>Connecting (relating):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading awareness</li> <li>• Against cancer</li> <li>• Inspired</li> <li>• Thanking</li> <li>• Explaining the charity</li> <li>• Identifying Movember</li> <li>• Linking Movember's website</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neat</li> <li>• Funny</li> <li>• Graceful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hate</li> <li>• Curiosity</li> <li>• Approbation</li> <li>• Sympathy</li> <li>• Appreciation</li> <li>• Admiration</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Conditions (participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a picture</li> <li>• Have a moustache</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be on Reddit</li> <li>• See the post</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have something to say</li> <li>● React (feel)</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation Style</b>	● Moustache	////
<b>Time</b>	5 months ago (Movember 2019)	
<b>Location</b>	Reddit (Online)	
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moustache</li> <li>● Reddit account</li> <li>● Mo'space (movember charity online space)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reddit account</li> </ul>

post itself as a social practice and its different elements, we can identify how the participants interact and react to different actions. As explained before, social practices are important because they require an activity; activities are relevant because they aim towards an achievement, and in the process, they allow reactions that are usually connected with feelings.<sup>52</sup>

Studying the relation between the participants and the actions, we can see how they interact in different ways with the topic of Movember and the macro-context (the subreddit). Along with the main topics being related to ideas closely connected to the Movember organization, the actions described by the commenters also display a relation to the topic of solidarity and the purpose of Movember.

Many of the comments were dedicated to spreading awareness about Movember and cancer, talking about the functionality and purpose of the organization and thanking the OP for representing Movember in such a creative way. The “admiration” comments were related to how majestic the OP looked and how by attracting people, there was space for curiosity and to open a conversation about the organization. The comments that were made with the purpose of criticizing the post and the OP focused on the visual aspects of the post, the posture of the OP, the color, how he was “seeking attention” and “showing off”, which in the context might be the purpose of the post. By seeking attention and by creating a creative picture with a showy posture and a remarkable position, the OP is creating a reaction from the commenters, inciting people to ask questions, to look at him and at Movember and to see why he is posing and why he is growing a moustache. Not only as a display of support and a sign of brotherhood but to call to people to donate and connect to the Movember website.

<sup>52</sup> Wodak and Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 1-15.



### Movember by sleanky

- r/funny
- 15.1K Upvotes
- 550 Comments
- 4 years ago



Figure 3

### *The role of the picture*

The first thing that can be noticed is that the picture is a vertical meme, an image spread through the internet that have a humorous character and that is composed in a sequence of two or more images positioned vertically. The first picture represents expectations and the focal point is a man with a very full beard, well stylized hair and fine facial features, like a model posing for professional photograph.

In the second picture, representing reality, we can see the recognizable actor Michael Cera with a small moustache, disorderly hair and who is not posing. As explained, the meme is posted with a humorous purpose not only due to the fact that it is posted in the subreddit r/funny but by the use of a meme format and comparing what is expected and what is the reality.

Table 2

Participants	OP (Original Poster)	Comments
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posting</li> <li>• Comparing</li> <li>• Joking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questioning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How growing facial hair helps charity?</li> <li>• How does Movember work?</li> <li>• How to raise money?</li> <li>• What organization is better?</li> <li>• Why to grow a moustache?</li> <li>• Commenting about shaving</li> </ul> <p><b>Criticizing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing</li> <li>• Joking</li> <li>• Pointing out differences between No Shave November and Movember</li> <li>• Commenting about shaving</li> <li>• Re-naming months (Octobeard, Manly March, Januhairy)</li> <li>• Concerns about money</li> </ul> <p><b>Admiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing</li> <li>• Joking</li> <li>• Appreciating manliness / beard</li> <li>• Legitimizing beards as “the ultimate expression of manliness”</li> </ul> <p><b>Connecting (relating):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Pledging for the cause”</li> <li>• Supporting the donation</li> <li>• Talking about the risk of cancer</li> <li>• Naming the charity and the organization</li> <li>• Linking to Movember’s website</li> <li>• Increasing the importance of the moustache</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating awareness</li> <li>● Participating</li> <li>● Sharing pictures of themselves</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annoying</li> <li>● Curiosity</li> <li>● Doubtful</li> <li>● Jokingly</li> <li>● Pride</li> <li>● Admiration</li> <li>● Uncertainty</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Conditions (participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be funny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on Reddit</li> <li>● See the post</li> <li>● Have something to say</li> <li>● React (feel)</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meme</li> </ul>	////
<b>Time</b>	4 years ago (2015)	
<b>Location</b>	Reddit (Online)	

<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reddit account</li> <li>• Something funny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reddit account</li> </ul>
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The main topics discussed in the post are: Movember, facial hair (beard, moustache, mo), and charity. Analyzing the social action in the comments, we can see how the poster only used the topic of Movember in the title to highlight a joke or to ridicule the moustache, thus the subreddit r/funny and a picture where expectations/reality are emphasized is utilized. The title “no shave November” (NSM) is used making allusion to a different movement that gets commonly confused with Movember. From the reaction of some of the commenters, it is clear now that the context of the post affects the way the post is perceived. A large quantity of comments were joking about the pictures, beards, moustaches, shaving and questioning how facial hair could “make a change?”. Many comments clarified the goals and purpose of Movember while at the same time differentiating it from NSM, making clear the relevance of the organization and how the creation of awareness and a sense of brotherhood by the act of participation was important. Not only keeping a beard but making the moustache a symbol of Movember which creates a sense of community, unity and solidarity.

My dad who took 3 months off chemo was able to grow his facial hair with me for

Movember. This was the last picture I took with him. He died 15 days later from pneumonia.

Couldn't find the original picture without the filter by hamzone

- r/lastimages
- 12.6K Upvotes
- 128 Comments
- 1 year ago

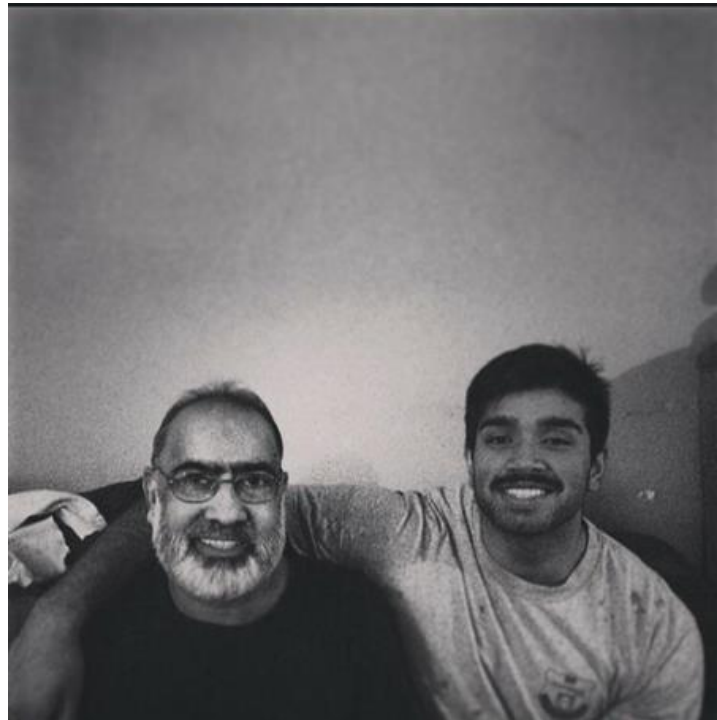


Figure 4

### *The role of the picture*

The picture is a black and white photograph of two men (OP and his father), they are close to each other, smiling, looking at the camera and the younger man has his arm over the shoulder of the older man. This position gives the impression of closeness and comfort between both men. The medium shot of the picture allow the viewer to develop as sense of personal contact and at the same time social, it feels like the viewer is sitting there, in OP's living room, sharing that moment with them. The binary of the colors of the photography makes it static, old-fashioned and formal while the smile of the men convey tranquility, warmness and openness.

Table 3

Participants	OP (Original Poster)	Comments
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing Moustache</li> <li>• Displaying support</li> <li>• Posting</li> </ul>	<b>Questioning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of the picture</li> <li>• OP's situation</li> <li>• OP's history</li> <li>• Cancer</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sharing</li> <li>● Taking a picture</li> <li>● Participating</li> <li>● Remembering</li> </ul>	<b>Admiring:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respecting OP</li> <li>● Describing the smile</li> <li>● Familiarity</li> <li>● Good memories</li> <li>● Beard</li> </ul> <b>Connecting (relating):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commenting about Movember</li> <li>● Sharing similar histories, memories.</li> <li>● Following after others / Solidarity</li> <li>● Sympathizing</li> <li>● Remembering</li> <li>● Keeping connection</li> <li>● Understanding</li> <li>● Relating</li> <li>● Educating</li> <li>● Expressing sympathy (sorry, sorry for your loss)</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neat</li> <li>● Graceful</li> <li>● Sweet</li> <li>● Closeness</li> <li>● Happy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respectful</li> <li>● Appreciation</li> <li>● Connection</li> <li>● Openness</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Conditions (participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have a picture □ last picture</li> <li>● Have a moustache</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on Reddit</li> <li>● See the post</li> <li>● Have something to say</li> <li>● React (feel)</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moustache</li> </ul>	////
<b>Time</b>	5 months ago (Movember 2019)	
<b>Location</b>	(Reddit)Online	
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moustache</li> <li>● Reddit account</li> <li>● Last image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reddit account</li> </ul>

The topics that are present in the comments are cancer, loss and sympathy. These are characteristics that align with the context of a post sharing the last image taken of a son and a father before the father's death. The social actions pre-

sent in the comments were mainly connecting with OP and with other commenters, sharing personal histories of relatives with cancer or other health problems and bonding with others by showing empathy and compassion. Many of the comments focused on the familiarity of the picture and how it showed a beautiful moment, through the smiles and the closeness of the relation characterized by the effort of both father and son participating in Movember and being a symbol of the campaign and the fight against cancer. In this post, not only commenters played an active role in the creation of unity, but OP participated actively by sharing his own story in the comments as well as following other commenters' history. The context of the post (the subreddit r/lastimages) also created a space for open, respectful and empathetic participation since most people that visit the subreddit are interested in this kind of connection and are looking to share their memories.

As Movember comes to an end... by The Collector4

- r/AdviceAnimals
- 11.2K Upvotes
- 339 Comments
- 4 years ago.



Figure 5

### *The role of the picture*

The meme used for the content of the post is a picture of a supporting character from a scene in the movie *The Lord of the Rings the fellowship of the ring*, in which the character says, *one does not simply walk into Mordor*, referring to how difficult it is to enter Mordor.<sup>53</sup> The meme is popularly used to mention something that is not so simple to do, in this case pointing out how people shave their moustaches when Movember comes to an end. The focal point of the image it is not the character but the sentence, the character is only relevant because it relates to the purpose of the meme, the sentence nonetheless, is the one that gives motivation to the image and make the humorous character explicit.

Table 4

Participants	OP (Original Poster)	Comments
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posting</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Participating</li> <li>• Joking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questioning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to shave?</li> <li>• How do they shave?</li> <li>• What is Movember?</li> <li>• Moustache or beard?</li> </ul> <p><b>Criticizing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making fun of moustaches</li> <li>• Pointing out differences between No Shave November and Movember</li> <li>• Commenting about mustaches and history</li> <li>• Shaming moustaches</li> <li>• Putting beards over moustaches</li> <li>• Commenting about how Hitler ruined the moustache style</li> </ul> <p><b>Admiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing mustaches</li> </ul>

<sup>53</sup> "One Does Not Simply Walk into Mordor | Know Your Meme," accessed May 26, 2019, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/one-does-not-simply-walk-into-mordor>.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Linking the Movember Ted Talk<sup>54</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Connecting (relating):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commenting about <b>Movember</b></li> <li>● Joking</li> <li>● Facial hair advises</li> <li>● Bringing the tooth-brush moustache back</li> <li>● Sharing pictures of themselves and their <b>moustaches</b></li> <li>● Comparing themselves</li> <li>● Sharing how they have <b>shaved</b></li> <li>● Talking about the importance of Movember and male cancer awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funny</li> <li>● Curious</li> <li>● Open</li> <li>● Sarcastic</li> <li>● Connect</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Conditions (participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have a joke</li> <li>● Use a meme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on Reddit</li> <li>● See the post</li> <li>● Have something to say</li> <li>● React</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meme</li> </ul>	////
<b>Time</b>	4 years ago	
<b>Location</b>	(Reddit)Online	

<sup>54</sup> TEDx Talks, Healthier Men, One Moustache at a Time: Adam Garone at TEDxToronto, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQvbKfEKLMI&feature=youtu.be>.

<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reddit account</li> <li>• Re-usable character (meme)</li> <li>• Joke</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reddit account</li> </ul>
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The topics of the comments are facial hair (moustache, beard), Hitler and shave. The focus of the meme was to comment on how in the moment of shaving the moustache, one of the steps is to humorously imitate “Hitler’s moustache”. The commenters referred several times to the way they shave, the process of shaving and how the toothbrush moustache is highly associated with Hitler. A big amount of comments were focus on criticism, disapproving the used of moustache, the popularity of the movement and the historical association of some moustache styles with personalities that ruin the style “for everyone”. Considering that it was posted in the subreddit r/Adviceanimals, a place created to “have a laugh”, the fact that even when most commenters were criticizing the style or moustaches they could connect to each other and develop a sense of unity by “laughing” together and having a shared experience.

HenryG & Sadokist: A love story started with a kiss by voikaledo

- r/GlobalOffensive
- 5.6K Upvotes
- 390 Comments
- 2 years ago

<https://clips.twitch.tv/proleaguecsgo/LongSnakeKappaPride>  
 Reverse loop (move your mouse over the gif): <https://twitter.com/ESLCS/status/792821183066451968>  
 Important edit: It's all for a good cause, guys. Please donate for the battle against cancer here:  
<https://uk.movember.com/team/2251419><sup>55</sup>

Figure 6

<sup>55</sup> This is the content of the post.

*The role and description of the video*

In the video Henry Greer and Matthew Truvett kiss each other because they have reached fourteen thousand pounds in denotation for the Movember campaign in the UK. They are gamers and host a podcast around the game counter strike, global offensive. They have gotten a lot of popularity in the gamer community due to their ability to play the game and the community they have created by streaming and participating in movements like Movember. As significant aspects of the video, it is relevant to point out that they are both man and they are presenting and streaming life.

*Figure 5*

Participants	OP (Original Poster)	Comments
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Displaying support</li> <li>● Posting</li> <li>● Sharing the Movember space to donate</li> <li>● Participating</li> <li>● Linking a video</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questioning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why did they kiss?</li> <li>● What is Movember?</li> <li>● What happened?</li> <li>● Questioning their sexual orientation</li> </ul> <p><b>Criticizing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ruining Esports in Russia</li> <li>● Shaming them</li> </ul> <p><b>Admiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respecting the challenge</li> <li>● Appreciating that they <b>kissed</b> to raise funds</li> <li>● Commenting the video as brilliant, beautiful, amazing.</li> <li>● Sharing the value of <b>Esports</b></li> <li>● Valuing the donations</li> <li>● Highlighting the collaboration of them to Movember</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Linking the Esports Movember highlights</li> <li>● Talking about the platform twitch</li> <li><b>Connecting (relating):</b></li> <li>● Commenting about Movember</li> <li>● Sharing the admiration for the gamers</li> <li>● Talking about KappaPride</li> <li>● Supporting each other</li> <li>● Sharing the Movember campaign</li> <li>● Donating</li> <li>● Talking about cancer awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Mode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Admiration</li> <li>● Respect</li> <li>● Unity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Joking</li> <li>● Appreciation</li> <li>● Connection</li> <li>● Openness</li> <li>● Admiration</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility Conditions (participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have something related to Global Offensive game</li> <li>● Reddit account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on Reddit</li> <li>● See the post</li> <li>● Have something to say</li> <li>● React (feel)</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation Style</b>	////	////
<b>Time</b>	2 years ago	
<b>Location</b>	(Reddit)Online	
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moustache</li> <li>● Reddit account</li> <li>● Last image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reddit account</li> </ul>

The topics that were more present in the post are kiss, kappapride (making reference to the homosexual pride community on twitch) and donation. Analyzing the post as a social practice it is evident the constant interaction between commenters, there was a high quantity of admiration comments, related to the

kiss, how the men on the video express their friendship and how the fact of making challenges to raise funds for Movember was a great strategy and a great form of create solidarity and awareness about the campaign.

#### 4.5 Results

Through the analysis and comparison of the different posts and their discourses expressed through the exchange of comments between commenters, it is relevant for me to see how the recontextualization of a practice and the interaction between participants is re-imagined. The experience of the individuals change from one comment to another, depending mainly on the context of the post (the subreddit where it is posted) and the purpose of the post (what the post is made for), so posts that are created in subreddits that have the purpose of “have a laugh” or share a “last image”, imply a different kind of comments and a different kind of interaction but in this process of exchange and communication users are open to the feeling of community and belonging, where they can contribute and partake in the construction of the platform itself.

Re-contextualization not only makes the re-contextualized social practices explicit to a greater or lesser degree, it also makes them pass through the filter of the practices in which they are inserted. In this way, the re-contextualization of a social practice (showing solidarity or support) makes itself explicit in the posts and its relevance can be understood through the interactions. Thus, the fact that Reddit has sub divisions (subreddits) that cover a wide variety of topics, allow different kind of audiences to interact in the same platform, and participate in different ways.

Re-contextualizing Movember allows the practice of it to be all those things the organization is aiming for and at the same time allows the new context to add new “hows” to the participants' experiences when taking into account the reoccurrence of the re-contextualization. Movember is represented over and over in different contexts, distancing itself from the initial notion but also providing new spaces for its dissemination and thus new support and meaning. The fact that a platform like Reddit is used for a new purpose, since the main goal of Reddit was not to create awareness but rather to entertain, thus re-contextualizes Movember based on various factors such as where it is posted, who is involved and the social relation between the participants.

## 5 Conclusion

This research paper was written with the aim of studying the question of, how solidarity is re-imagined on new media platforms such as Reddit, and how the

production of certain narratives influences the way we perceive solidarity in projects like Movember. Taking these inquiries into consideration the purpose of the research was to analyze how new media platforms and in particular Reddit influence the process of re-imagining transnational solidarity, giving people new spaces for interaction and the sense of community. The research explores narratives and the production of virtual communities, covering in this way the discursive construction of solidarity, one of the sub-themes of this year's intensive program.

With the ambition of exploring the research question five different post on Reddit were analyzed using critical discourse analysis. The material was chosen based on the topic of Movember and their popularity on the platform (post that have the most upvotes), it is relevant to notice that the most popular posts on the topic were characterized by the joking and sensitive aspect, some of them were even called "ridiculous" referring to the joking interaction of the original poster, while others connected Movember directly with the sensitivity of sickness and death. In a deeper sense, the research looked at the different narratives that are created on Reddit and their relation to the topic of Movember, producing a sense of unity and opening space for the re-imagination of solidarity, reflecting on the new environments created by new media platforms for the transmission of ideas and the creation of new means for solidarity.

After analyzing and studying the different interactions that new media platforms like Reddit allow, it is possible to conclude that due to the extensive use of the internet in modern days, it has become a central element of everyone's life, not only it is used on a daily basis for entertainment or information, but it is highly used as a medium for communication and development of social interactions. Thus, internet and new media platforms have added new elements to the way people interrelate with each other on a transnational level, making the construction of community and participation an important part of the process of communication. Internet platforms and digital spaces provide new opportunities to contribute in different ways in campaigns all around the world, contributing to an extensive net of virtual interactions that renovate the sense of community and allow the reimagination of solidarity.

The versatility of Reddit as a media platform, and its particular characteristics (anonymity, openness, interactivity, diversity, creation of groups, between others) favor the development of an open communication between users, supporting in this way the constant re-definition of communities, growing closer and expanding simultaneously, and allowing everyone to participate, contributing in this way to the sense of affinity and solidarity.

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# Identities on the move: The impact of Interrail on the Europeanness of travellers

*Arianna Rizzi*

## 1 Introduction

Mobility is definitely one characteristic element of the contemporary human condition – “people move, things move, ideas move”.<sup>1</sup> Physical movement is but one of the aspects of this phenomenon: in fact, according to Cresswell, mobility entails two other fundamental components, namely the representations of movement and the embodied practice of movement.<sup>2</sup> While the latter element affects our everyday life – the simple choice to walk, commute or drive to school or work becomes part of our lifestyle and often reveals our socio-economic status – it is perhaps the representations of movement that truly demonstrate how relevant for our present mobility is.

Let us just think about the way the press and politicians portray immigrant mobilities; or the idea of a ‘right to mobility’ as constitutive of Western citizenship expressed in some governmental documents<sup>3</sup>; or, again, the way travellers have been described in novels such as *On the road* and became symbols of a whole generation. All of this, more or less directly, has an impact on our society.

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Cresswell, ‘Towards a Politics of Mobility’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, no. 1 (2010): 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Not only society is affected by the consequences of mobility: a number of studies have demonstrated that mobility can also influence the identity of those who experience it. In particular, within the varied forms of this phenomenon, cross-border mobility appears to have a high transformative potential.<sup>4</sup> By ‘cross-border mobility’ – which differentiates from migration – we refer to the practice of crossing borders for an intentionally limited amount of time, after which individuals usually return to their home country.<sup>5</sup> This type of movement appears to be particularly effective when it comes to the construction of a ‘we-feeling’, since it brings about direct contact between people of different nationalities<sup>6</sup> – and coming into contact with people who are in some way ‘unlike’ us, according to Allport<sup>7</sup>, would diminish prejudice towards one another. This formally means that diversity reduces ethnocentric attitudes and fosters solidarity.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, unsurprisingly cross-border mobility has called for the attention of both scholars and policy-makers<sup>9</sup>, and especially EU policy-makers, since this kind of mobility is allegedly able to boost people’s commitment as European citizens<sup>10</sup> and make institutional integration easier<sup>11</sup>. That is why, in the European context, much interest has been devoted to researching the relation between *Erasmus*, as a form of cross-border mobility, and the “Europeanness” of those who take part in it.<sup>12</sup> It is assumed – but it still has not been univocally proved – that Erasmus “bring[s] students in contact with other European cultures and people and, consequently, ... foster[s] a European identity”. Plus, European Commission’s programme of which Erasmus was at first part – *Socrates* – explicitly included,

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<sup>4</sup> Relevant considerations on the topic can be found in ‘This Trip Really Changed Me’ (Chaim, 2004) and ‘Mobile Transitions: A Conceptual Framework for Researching a Generation on the Move’ (Robertson et al., 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Davide Mazzoni et al., ‘Cross-Border Mobility, European Identity and Participation among European Adolescents and Young Adults’, *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 15, no. 3 (2018): 325.

<sup>6</sup> Sigalas, ‘The Effectiveness of Intergroup Contact during the ERASMUS Year Abroad’, *European Union Politics* 11, no. 2 (2010): 242.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 281.

<sup>8</sup> Robert D. Putnam, ‘E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century’, *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30, no. 2 (2007): 142.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Van der Velde and Ton van Naerssen, ‘People, Borders, Trajectories: An Approach to Cross-Border Mobility and Immobility in and to the European Union’, *Area* 43, no. 2 (2011): 218.

<sup>10</sup> Mazzoni et al., *ibid.*, 324.

<sup>11</sup> Emmanuel Sigalas, ‘Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity’, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> As examples of relevant academic literature on the topic, we can consider ‘Does ERASMUS Student Mobility promote a European Identity?’ (Sigalas, 2009), ‘Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity’ (Sigalas, 2010), ‘Student mobility and European identity: Erasmus study as a civic experience?’ (Mitchell, 2012) and ‘Evaluating the impact of the Erasmus programme: skills and European identity’ (Jacobone & Moro, 2015).

among its objectives, that of leading “to greater understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union” via the intercultural dimension of education.<sup>13</sup>

Whereas the most institutionalised forms of European cross-border movement have been studied quite extensively, there exists a research gap concerning those initiatives that indeed involve mobility but are classified as leisure activities: this is namely the case of *Interrail*. Interrail, whose birth dates back to 1972, is a popular rail pass offering the freedom to travel flexibly around 31 countries in Europe within a fixed amount of time. Interrail as a travel concept was born with the aim to make intercultural exchanges more and more possible, in a historical time characterised by a stark pro-European atmosphere and hopes to enhance freedom of movement.<sup>14</sup> Even though Interrail is not an EU-driven initiative and encompasses countries outside the Union, its European dimension and cross-border mobility component suggest that some of the assumptions regarding Erasmus+ can plausibly be made about it as well. Hence, in order to clarify if and how Interrail can influence the sense of identification of – in this case – not students or trainees, but European travellers with Europe, we ask ourselves: *how does Interrail influence the (re)construction of European identity of those individuals who experience it?*

Our reflection, which aims to answer the previous question, will be articulated as follows. A first section will be devoted to the theories and concepts employed to frame the whole research. Within the theoretical and conceptual framework of this paper, European identity will be studied by applying Henri Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory, that is to say in terms of self-identity, value and emotional significance.<sup>15</sup> European identity entails a number of dimensions in which, according to Böckenförde<sup>16</sup>, European solidarity is to be included as a major component. The latter topic will also be studied in depth, taking into account the definition of solidarity elaborated by Larry May.<sup>17</sup> A second section will explain the methodology adopted in this study. The relation between Interrail and European identity will be analysed by means of the survey method, via a questionnaire distributed to Interrail users on social media. The aim of it is to verify if Interrail contributes to the fostering of European identity and if the initiative ultimately has an impact on the development of a European-wide solidarity. Consequently, the following

<sup>13</sup> European Parliament and Council, ‘Decision No 819/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 1995 Establishing the Community Action Programme “Socrates”’.

<sup>14</sup> Martin T. Jensen, Szilvia Gyimothy, and Ole B. Jensen, ‘Staging Interrail Mobilities’, *Tourist Studies* 16, no. 2 (2016): 118–119.

<sup>15</sup> Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (London; New York: Academic Press, 1978), 63.

<sup>16</sup> Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, ‘Conditions for European Solidarity’, in *What Holds Europe Together?* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Larry May, *The Socially Responsive Self: Social Theory and Professional Ethics* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 44.

section will discuss and analyse the data collected through the questionnaire. Finally, before drawing our conclusions, a reflection will be conducted on the interests of the European Union in implementing the programme *Discover EU*.

## **2 A conceptual and theoretical framework to study Interrail and the (re)construction of European identity**

This study takes into account the key concepts of Interrail and European identity – under which we also find European solidarity. As a starting point, we assume that there is a relation between the former and the latter, where Interrail represents the independent variable and European identity is the dependent variable. Let us now frame and define each of the concepts before moving on to the study of their relation.

### **2.1 Interrail**

Whether you are a traveller or simply curious about the initiative, your first access point to Interrail will be, in all likelihood, the official web portal <https://www.interrail.eu/>. Browsing the website in search for how the Eurail Group itself – the Dutch company which currently owns and manages the initiative<sup>18</sup> – describes Interrail, we can find that the page titled ‘What is Interrail?’ provides an interesting definition:

Where in Europe do you want to be? Interrail is the unique and exciting way to get there. One train pass to help you open doors to new destinations, cultures and friendships all over Europe. You can choose from over 40,000 destinations in 31 countries, designing a European adventure that’s personal to you. You create your own story.<sup>19</sup>

Interrail is thus no tour operator, but rather an intermediary service between the travellers and 38 European railway (and ferry) companies, which ensures that the former “can get to wherever [they] want to be” via the latter.<sup>20</sup>

At present, Interrail allows travellers to move around 31 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland,

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Our Company’, Interrail, last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.interrail.eu/en/about-us/our-company>.

<sup>19</sup> ‘What is Interrail?’, Interrail, last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.interrail.eu/en/interrail-passes/what-is-interrail>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; ‘Interrail Passes’, Interrail, last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.interrail.eu/en/interrail-passes>.

France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.<sup>21</sup> From this comprehensive list of the countries taking part in the “Interrail community”<sup>22</sup>, it emerges that Interrail adopts a more encompassing map of Europe than the one outlined by EU member states.

When it comes to who can access the service offered by Interrail, “both European citizens and non-Europeans who are official legal residents of European countries”<sup>23</sup> are allowed to, where ‘European’ refers to an even longer list of countries: the members of the aforementioned Interrail community plus Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Gibraltar, Iceland, Isle of Man, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Russia, San Marino, Ukraine and Vatican City.<sup>24</sup> The picture becomes thus more complex.

To recapitulate, people either owning a passport or living in one of the 49 participating countries (or both) can travel freely within the ‘Interrail community’ area, made up of 31 countries. In all other cases, Interrail services are accessible under a different name: Eurail – which this research will not take into account, being focused on Interrail and Interrailers proper. Anyway, we see how the ‘Interrail meaning’ of ‘European’ – a term which is widely employed all over the website – oversteps the limits of the definition given by the European Union.

Speaking of the different travel options available, Interrail offers a variety of rail passes. As for the duration of the trip, passes range from a minimum validity of 3 days to a maximum of 3 months of travelling. As for the number of countries travellers can visit, there is one basic distinction: the One Country Pass allows them to visit one single country, while the Global Pass gives them the possibility to (virtually) access all of the 31 countries of the Interrail community.

Eventually, everybody – from children to elders – can travel around Europe using an Interrail pass, with the only difference that travellers benefit from special tariffs if they belong to one of the following age groups: children (4-11), youth (under 27) or seniors (over 60).<sup>25</sup> However, despite the fairly recent opening to other age categories<sup>26</sup>, the youth remain Interrail’s main target, something which

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Travel in 31 Countries’, Interrail, last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.interrail.eu/en/destinations>.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Booking conditions’, last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.interrail.eu/en/terms-and-conditions/booking-conditions>.

<sup>23</sup> ‘What is Interrail?’, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> ‘Booking conditions’, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> ‘Europe in your back pocket - 45 years of InterRail posters and advertising’, Retours, last accessed 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://retours.eu/en/43-interrail-posters/>.

is consistent with the statistical evidence that young people are currently the most affected by mobility<sup>27</sup>.

### 1.1.1 Free Interrail and Discover EU

Given the centrality of the youth as users of Interrail passes, in 2015 Vincent-Immanuel Herr and Martin Speer came up with the *Free Interrail* proposal. Free Interrail is a civil society initiative recommending that “every EU citizen receives a letter from the EU Commission upon turning 18 ... [containing] a voucher for a 1-month Interrail pass”.<sup>28</sup> The rationale behind such a proposal is that, within the crisis the EU is faced with, young people in particular have been largely neglected.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, Free Interrail would constitute for the EU an opportunity to reconnect with its youngest citizens – and vice versa.<sup>30</sup> Some of the main objectives of Free Interrail are:

- Increasing youth mobility;
- Providing equal access to international travel, regardless of financial or national background;
- Fighting against stereotypes and prejudices through first-hand encounters with people from other countries.<sup>31</sup>

In June 2018, Free Interrail was finally endorsed by the European Union at the level of the Commission through the pilot project Discover EU, which granted the possibility to travel around Europe to 15,000 EU youth turning 18 during that year.<sup>32</sup> Considered the positive outcome of the pilot project, two additional rounds of applications were opened – one in November 2018 for those willing to travel during the first half of 2019<sup>33</sup>, and one in May for the second half of the year<sup>34</sup>.

## 1.2 European identity

Differently from Interrail, European identity is a concept whose dimensions are less directly intelligible. This is firstly due to the fact that, even before European

<sup>27</sup> Shanthi Robertson, Anita Harris, and Loretta Baldassar, ‘Mobile Transitions: A Conceptual Framework for Researching a Generation on the Move’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 21, no. 2 (2018): 213.

<sup>28</sup> ‘About’, #FreeInterrail – Moving Europe Forward, last accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <http://freeinterrail.eu/about/>.

<sup>29</sup> ‘FAQ’, #FreeInterrail – Moving Europe Forward, last accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <http://freeinterrail.eu/faq/>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> ‘About’, ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> ‘DiscoverEU: 20,000 additional travel passes available for 18-year-olds to experience Europe’, European Commission, last accessed 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-19-2328\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-2328_en.htm).



identity, identity itself is a widely debated notion.<sup>35</sup> As a starting point, we can consider the definition given within the domain of psychology:

... The concept of identity is what bridges the gap between the self and the outside world; the idea that, while individuals are unique and independent, their perceptions of themselves can only be constructed in relation, sympathy or opposition to elements of the outside world.<sup>36</sup>

In these terms, identity is a matter of how people see themselves, how they see one another, and how they interact<sup>37</sup> – both as individuals and as part of a group. Individual identity, then, seems to blend with ‘group identity’, defined by Fligstein as “based on commonly held meanings and values and [requiring] face-to-face interaction with other members of the group in order to come into existence and persist”.<sup>38</sup>

Since the present study intends to investigate the reconstruction of identity, it is also relevant to dwell on the meaning of identity as a building (and rebuilding) process, then, more correctly, on ‘identification’. According to Hall:

In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.<sup>39</sup>

Adopting a discursive approach, identification can be seen as a construction, a process never completed.<sup>40</sup> Considering the finality of our research, this is perhaps the best way to frame identity – as something which is neither fixed nor static, but always in the making.

Moving on from this general premise regarding identity to European identity proper, we reflect upon the semantics of the latter expression in the attempt to prevent further ambiguity. The debate on ‘European’ identity has often resulted in equating ‘Europe’ with the European Union.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen with Interrail’s map of Europe, this a very reductive way to portray a region that, albeit having

<sup>35</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Introduction: Who Needs Identity?’, in *Questions of Cultural Identity* (United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Bruter, ‘On What Citizens Mean by Feeling “European”: Perceptions of News, Symbols and Borderless-ness’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 26.

<sup>37</sup> Erik Jones, *Identity and Solidarity* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Neil Fligstein, ‘Who Are the Europeans?’, in *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 126.

<sup>39</sup> Hall, *ibid.*, 2

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Diez, ‘Europäische Identität, Die EU Und Das Andere: Von Der Vergangenheit Und Neuen Grenzziehungen’, in *Die Kulturelle Integration Europas*, 237.

hotly disputed borders, geographically goes beyond the EU member states. Many non-EU states – such as Switzerland or Norway – are undoubtedly part of the general discourse on Europe; therefore, although referring from time to time to the EU – being it the most influential polity in the region – this study adopts a broadly encompassing conception of ‘European identity’ that goes beyond the mere ‘EU identity’.<sup>42</sup>

Besides terminological issues, what is *really* European identity? Unsurprisingly, there is no definitive answer – some even claim there is no such thing as a “European demos”.<sup>43</sup> For instance, if we posit that European identity is simply “a national identity writ large, then we automatically stumble upon the lack of” – for example – “a single historic homeland”.<sup>44</sup> If differently we conceive European identity as “completely ... unlike the existing national identities, placing the emphasis on diversity rather than unity, we run the risk to come up with an understanding of collective identity that may be too thin”.<sup>45</sup> Also, studies in which participants were asked what being European means for them reveal that “Europeans mean many different things when they say that they identify as Europeans”.<sup>46</sup> Thus, researching European identity involves a certain amount of frustration, considering that “very seldom” do the findings “agree with the researchers’ expectations of what it means to identify as European”.<sup>47</sup> The few certainties we have on the topic mainly regard its relation with national identity: while “group identity theories claim that there is an antagonism between identification with the nation and identification with Europe ... public opinion polls” – like Eurobarometer – “show on the contrary a strong compatibility”.<sup>48</sup>

Acknowledging the fact that ‘European identity’ has no univocal meaning, a theoretical approach has to be adopted anyhow, in order to be able to analyse the issue in a structured way. The selected theoretical framework is the one of Social Identity Theory elaborated by Henri Tajfel, therefore European identity will be studied in terms of the notion of social identity.<sup>49</sup> The latter, according to its proponent, is to be understood as:

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>43</sup> David Cameron, ‘EU Speech at Bloomberg’ (Bloomberg, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Emmanuel Sigalas, ‘Does ERASMUS Student Mobility Promote a European Identity?’, *Constitutionalism Web-Papers* 2 (2009): 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Juan Diez Medrano, ‘Unpacking European Identity’, *Politique Européenne* 30, no. 1 (2010): 45.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Magnette, ‘How Can One Be European? Reflections on the Pillars of European Civic Identity’, *European Law Journal* 13, no. 5 (2007): 667.

<sup>49</sup> Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups*, 61.

... That part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.<sup>50</sup>

There are three core elements of social identity: (1) the awareness of belonging to a group; (2) the evaluation of this membership; (3) and the emotions aroused by it. As concise as it may sound, this definition of social identity is deliberately narrow, both to avoid "endless and often sterile discussions" on identity and to enable us to refer to a limited but well outlined concept later in the analysis.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, "the image or concept that an individual has of himself or herself is infinitely more complex" than 'social identity' thus described<sup>52</sup>, but this definition serves well the purpose and scope of this research.

The appropriateness of this theoretical framework is confirmed by the fact that the notion of social identity has been previously employed to study European identity. In that regard, Sigalas' studies of the effects of Erasmus on European identity<sup>53</sup> offer some significant prompts on how to research Europeanness in the context of cross-border mobility.

Drawing on these works, if we apply Tajfel's concept of social identity to European identity we obtain that European would be someone who identifies him or herself as such and attaches a value and an emotional significance to it.<sup>54</sup> The evaluative and emotional component are as important as the awareness of belonging to Europe, since without attaching a certain importance to self-identity, "European identity will be nothing more than an empty shell".<sup>55</sup> To operationalize the concept of European identity in these terms, Sigalas proposes to measure self-identity, pride, cohesiveness, commonalities and geographical attachment.<sup>56</sup> A notably absent element, in his analysis of European identity, is the dimension of solidarity, which here will instead be taken into account.

### *1.2.1 Solidarity and the European context*

To get acquainted with the concept of solidarity, there are two main definitions which are worth examining. In empirical or descriptive terms, solidarity refers "to a kind of connection to other people, to other members of a group, large or

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> We are namely talking about Sigalas, 'Does ERASMUS Student Mobility Promote a European Identity?' (2009) and Sigalas, 'Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity' (2010).

<sup>54</sup> Sigalas, 'Does ERASMUS Student Mobility Promote a European Identity?', 3.

<sup>55</sup> Sigalas, 'Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity', 245.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 247.

small”.<sup>57</sup> This conception of solidarity encompasses those “microphenomena such as actions, motivations and attitudes as more or less solidary”.<sup>58</sup> In normative terms, solidarity signifies “assuming responsibility for one another” and “positive action or services on behalf of others, whether individuals or a particular community or society as a whole”.<sup>59</sup> While the line separating the two definitions is quite blurred, what clearly emerges from both of them is how solidarity – whether present or absent – is a component of identity. This can be affirmed because solidarity is “concerned with community links and community-oriented activity”<sup>60</sup> and identity is (also) a matter of how people see one another and how they interact, as already stated (§ 1.2). The connection is therefore evident.

The previous definitions, however, do not provide any guidance regarding the operationalization of the concept of solidarity. That is why, in view of the later data collection, we turn to Larry May’s formulation of solidarity. In his *The Socially Responsive Self*, May enumerates the conditions that “normally come together in solidarity”:

- Conscious intergroup identification;
- Bonds of sentiment;
- Interest in the group’s well-being;
- Shared values and beliefs;
- Readiness to show moral support<sup>61</sup>.

Therefore, “solidarity is more than mere group identification”.<sup>62</sup> Going through the distinctive characteristics of solidarity as theorised by May, we find that these dimensions not only are consistent with the empirical and normative definitions of solidarity, but they also can be easily translated into measurable parameters.

Now, let us shift our attention towards solidarity in the European context. Even though it is “premature to speak of a nation of Europeans”, raising Europe-wide solidarity as a possibility “is nevertheless not utopian”, since awareness of a European cultural and, to some extent, political identity – in this case within the EU – may emerge.<sup>63</sup> But solidarity is not just a basic value of the Europe of today, as highlighted in the draft Constitutional Treaty and in the preamble to the Charter

<sup>57</sup> Arto Laitinen and Anne Birgitta Pessi, ‘Solidarity: Theory and Practice. An Introduction’, in *Solidarity: Theory and Practice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 2; Böckenförde, *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Laitinen and Pessi, *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Böckenförde, *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> May, *ibid.*, 44.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

<sup>63</sup> Böckenförde, *ibid.*

of Fundamental Rights of the EU.<sup>64</sup> It is also constitutive of Europe's history.<sup>65</sup> In 1950, Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of the EU – stated that Europe would be “built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity”<sup>66</sup>. According to José Manuel Durão Barroso:

Solidarity is at the heart of the European project. Without solidarity, the European Union would not exist. The historic enlargement of the EU into central and eastern Europe ... restored the meaning of this founding principle of the European Union.<sup>67</sup>

That is why it makes sense to investigate, as a core component of European identity, the presence (or absence) of solidarity and the modalities in which it manifests within Interrail travellers.

## 2 Methodology

In the light of this framework, let us move onto the explanation of the methodological choices that will inform the analysis of the relation between Interrail and European identity, in view of answering our research question.

As anticipated, this research follows an empirical approach – namely, it will make use of the survey method to study the issue at hand. Knowing that “different types of questions mean different kinds of data requirements”<sup>68</sup>, the latter method was selected since a systematic strategy to gather observations on a large number of Interrailers was needed in order to find a solid answer to our initial question. Moreover, this method has the advantage that it can be employed both in a quantitative and qualitative sense: although the balance remains tipped towards the quantitative, also qualitative data will be collected.

The present paper will delve into the results of a cross-sectional (1), one-group (2) post-test only (3) study<sup>69</sup>, meaning that (1) the data from the relevant population have been collected once, at a specific point in time; (2) there was no

<sup>64</sup> Danuta Hübner, ‘Solidarity on Trial’, in *What Holds Europe Together?* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Kenneth Murphy, ‘Solidarity and Freedom’, in *What Holds Europe Together?* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Alexandra Pimor, ‘Solidarity was a founding principle of European unity – it must remain so’, *The Conversation*, 24th March 2017. <https://theconversation.com/solidarity-was-a-founding-principle-of-european-unity-it-must-remain-so-74580>.

<sup>67</sup> José Manuel Durão Barroso, ‘Solidarity: at the Heart of Europe's Past, Present and Future’ (Warsaw, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> Vera Toepoel, *Doing Surveys Online* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016).

<sup>69</sup> Peter Schulz, Nicola Diviani, and Maddalena Fiordelli, *La ricerca empirica nelle scienze della comunicazione. Fondamenti, metodi e strumenti* (Carocci, 2013).

control group; and (3) no questionnaire was administered to the participants before their Interrail experience – they received one only after they had already come back from their trip. This research design is described as “pre-experimental design”<sup>70</sup> since it clearly has a number of downsides, such as the absence of a control group and of a pre-test, which would provide valuable datasets to compare. However, the potential of such a research is to allow scholars to make the first steps into a topic that has never (or only little) been explored before – which is exactly the case of the relation between Interrail and European identity.

## 2.1 Population and sampling: who are the Interrailers?

Before structuring and distributing a questionnaire, it is always crucial to form an idea on the population with which one will (supposedly) deal with. For this purpose, we will follow Erik Cohen’s classification of tourists on the basis of the degree of novelty and familiarity of the trips they normally undertake. Among the four ‘tourist typologies’ listed and described by Cohen (*organized mass tourist, organized individual tourist, explorer, drifter*), the “explorer”<sup>71</sup> appears as the one that fits Interrailers the most. The explorer is in fact a tourist that “tries to get off the beaten track”, but also “looks for comfortable accommodations and reliable means of transportation”<sup>72</sup> – something which can be reconnected to the choice of travelling with well-established rail companies via the Interrail pass. Finally, “although novelty dominates”, the explorer does not plunge completely into the host society, instead he or she “retains some of the basic routines and comforts of his native way”.<sup>73</sup>

To complement the portrait deriving from this categorisation, since Europe is a significant backpacker destination and backpacking in the region is closely associated with rail travel – and notably Interrail<sup>74</sup> – we can state that Interrailers fall within the subcultural phenomenon<sup>75</sup> of backpackers. In the backpacking way of travelling, the journey is “a way to experience freedom and flexibility from modern society”<sup>76</sup>. Plus, contemporary backpacking reflects the major topics

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Erik Cohen, ‘Toward a Sociology of International Tourism’, *Social Research* 39, no. 1 (1972): 167-168.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> James Johnson, ‘Euro-Railing: A Mobile-Ethnography of Backpacker Train Travel’, in *Beyond Backpacker Tourism: Mobilities and Experiences* (Bristol, UK; Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2010), 102, 106.

<sup>75</sup> Mark J. Salvaggio, ‘Bursting the Backpacker Bubble: Exploring Backpacking Ideology, Practices, and Contradictions’ (University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2016), 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 26.

found in the writings of – among others – Hemingway or Kerouac, which celebrate “getting away from it all, along with ... tourist angst, rebelliousness, authenticity, and the rituals of indulgence”.<sup>77</sup>

Of course, the characteristics previously presented form just a preliminary image of the ‘Interrailer prototype’, meaning that they are meant to provide some general orientation and that this image will be refined later, during the analysis of the collected data.

Talking of the sampling, self-selection of participants will be adopted. By self-selection we understand the non-random sampling technique which consists in “the inclusion or exclusion of sampling units ... determined by whether the units themselves agree or decline to participate in the sample”.<sup>78</sup> The participants in the study will thus be former Interrail (and not Eurail) users of both sexes who voluntarily decide to fill in the questionnaire following an invitation on Facebook or Instagram – since the questionnaire will be distributed on these social media platforms, notably in groups (this is the case of Facebook) or via private message (the case of Instagram). Considered the selected research design and sampling technique, this study does not allow to make any generalizations on the relative population.

## 2.2 Building the questionnaire

In the light of the research question and the envisaged typology of respondents, the questionnaire, hosted on Qualtrics, has been organized in three sections – of which the last one is devoted to the collection of demographic data. Let us now dwell on the content of the first two sections.

After filtering out Eurail travellers and people who were accidentally reached by the questionnaire but have never gone Interrailing, in the first part of the questionnaire the participants are asked a series of questions about their Interrail experience. These questions cover the following topics:

- Number of Interrail trips accomplished;
- Year of the most recent Interrail trip;
- Type of Interrail pass used (One country vs. Global Pass);
- Countries visited;
- Length of the whole trip vs. the days spent travelling;
- (Possible) travel buddies;
- Interaction with other travellers vs. interaction with locals;
- Level of satisfaction with the Interrail trip.

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<sup>77</sup> Greg Richards and Julie Wilson, *The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2004), cited in Salvaggio, *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>78</sup> Sonya K. Sterba and E. Micheal Foster, ‘Self-Selected Sample’, in *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, Paul Lavrakas ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), 2.

The second section deals more specifically with European identity and solidarity. The respondents are asked questions on these topics:

- Characteristics of a European person – the respondents have to write some words or a phrase that, in their view, can describe a ‘typical European’;
- Self-identity – the respondents have to decide whether they feel more (or only) European, nationals of their own country or citizens of the world;
- Interrail as an experience strengthening (or not) their identification with Europe;
- Before vs. after Interrail:
  - evaluation of being European;
  - identification with the Europe as a continent;
  - identification with European symbols (e.g. the European flag);
  - European pride;
  - trust in other Europeans;
  - willingness to support fellow Europeans in need.
- Solidarity:
  - in real life and online;
  - among travellers and involving locals.

While the indicators regarding Interrail travelling could be determined without resorting to academic literature, to measure the concepts of European identity and solidarity we took inspiration from the questionnaire elaborated by Sigalas within his study ‘Cross-border mobility and European identity’ (for the former) and from May’s conceptualisation of solidarity as in *The Socially Responsive Self* (for the latter). As a side note, the scales to measure the frequency of an action or the rate of agreement with a statement have been modeled on the five-level Likert-type scale.

### 3 Presentation and analysis of the results

The questionnaire reached 144 people in the space of six days. From this total, only 99 answers could be taken into consideration for the final analysis, being the other 45 either incomplete answers or answers from people who had not traveled with Interrail, but rather with Eurail or who did not travel at all. Let us now dwell on the demographics of the sample thus obtained.



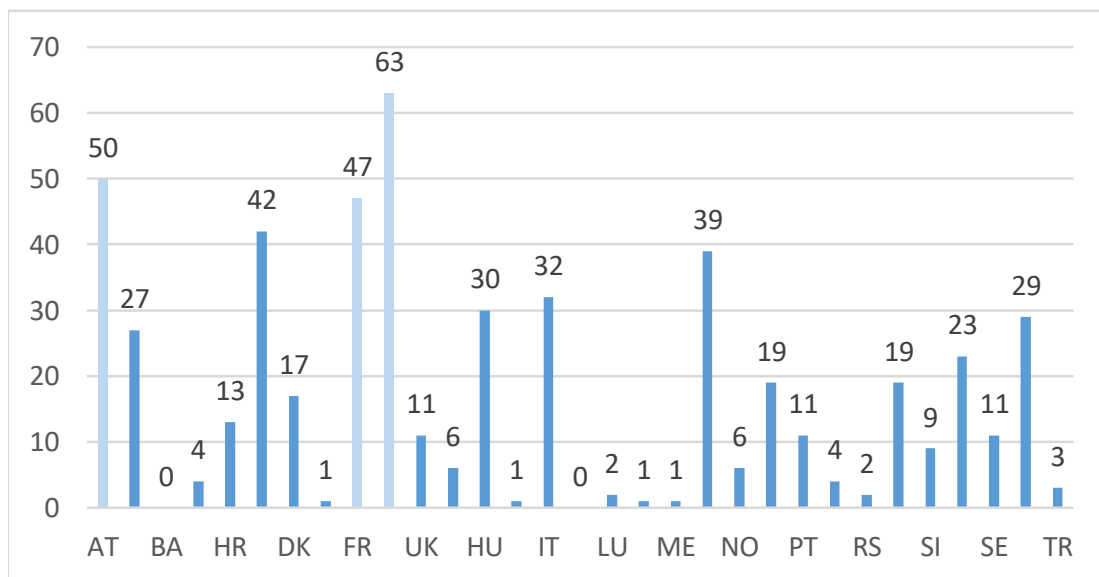
**Gender:** 58% of the respondents are female and 41% male, while 1% did not specify their gender. Gender-wise, the sample is not seriously unbalanced.

**Age:** According to how old they were when travelling, 93% of the participants belonged to the age category 16-27, while only 4% were 28-39, 2% were 40-59 and only 1% were over 60. Our sample is hence rather young.

**Nationality:** Interrailers of 26 different nationalities participated in the survey – in particular, the most recurrent nationalities were Italian (36%), Dutch (16%), German (11%) and British (7%). It must also be noted that among these 26 citizenships, 6 correspond to extra-European countries like Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Russia, Thailand or the United States. In sum, 99% of the respondents have at least one European passport, while the remaining 1% has only a non-European one. ‘Strictly European’ people amount to 92% of the respondents.

### 3.1 The experience of Interrail

Within our sample, the majority of the respondents have travelled with Interrail only once (82%); thus – although 12% have gone Interrailing twice and 6% three or more times – Interrail appears to be mostly a ‘one-shot experience’. An even starker majority of travellers – 9 in 10 Interrailers – chose a Global Pass to tour around Europe, while only 10% decided to explore one country in depth. *Graph 1* illustrates the frequency with which the countries of the Interrail community (indicated with their two-letter ISO codes) have been chosen as destinations by the travellers. Germany, Austria and France appear to be the most popular ones.



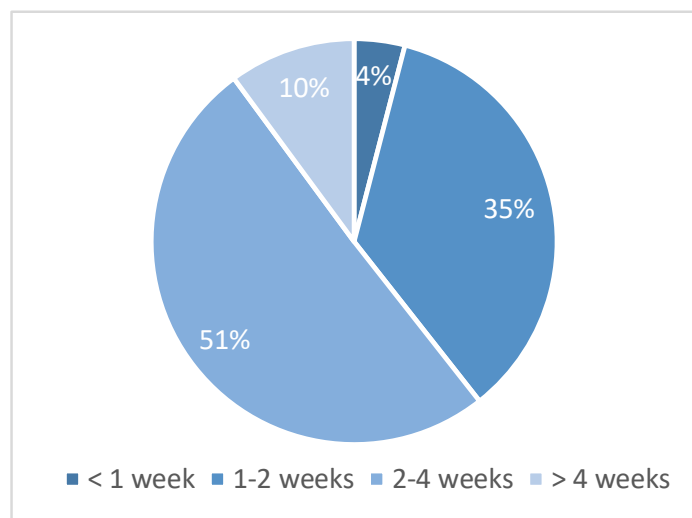
GRAPH 1. Q5: Which country/countries did you visit?

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

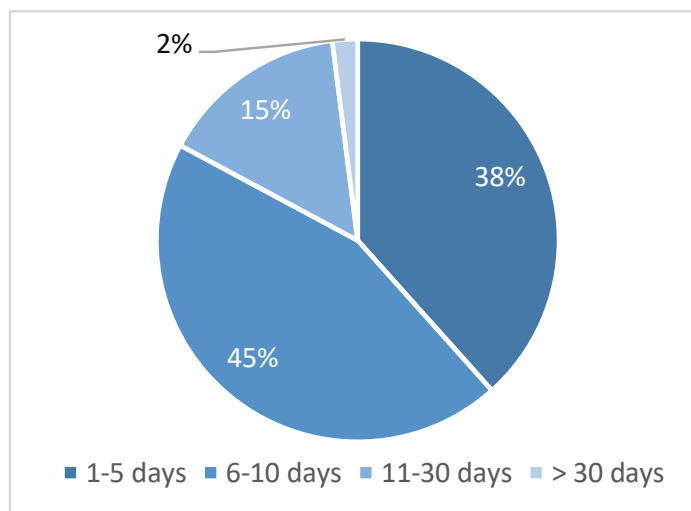
Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire “Interrail”, University of Groningen, 2019

*Graph 2* and *3* illustrate instead the duration of the participants' Interrail trips (*graph 2*) and the amount of days spent on the move (*graph 3*). Most respondents accomplished a 2-to-4-week trip and spent either 1-5 days (38%) or 6-10 days (45%) in trains, buses or ferries.

### 3.1.1 Traveling alone or in company and the levels of socialisation



GRAPH 2. Q6: How many weeks did your trip last?



GRAPH 3. Q7: How many days did you spend travelling?

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire "Interrail", University of Groningen, 2019

When it comes to the choice of travelling alone or in company, 77% of the people travelled with someone else – of which 49% with one travel buddy and 51% with a group – while only 23% went on a solo trip. Interestingly, among those traveling

with someone else, 97% of people went on a trip with at least one person of their own nationality, while only in 3% of the cases the travelling duos or groups were more variegated. This confirms Cohen's thesis that tourists of the "explorer" kind still want to recreate a familiar atmosphere around them when travelling.

Regarding the respondents' contacts with both locals and other travellers, it is relevant to have a look at the correlation ( $R$ ) between the modality of travelling – alone, in a duo or in a group – and the levels of socialisation, to see if this latter variable depends on the choice of travelling solo or accompanied by somebody. For this purpose, we correlate the number of people (ranging from 0 to 9) with whom the respondents shared their trip with the declared levels of socialisation with both locals and other backpackers:

- Number of people with whom the trip was shared / Levels of socialisation with **locals**  
→  $R_1 = -0,09254$  (or -9,3%)
- Number of people with whom the trip was shared / Levels of socialisation with **other travellers**  
→  $R_2 = 0,08264$  (or 8,3%)

The obtained  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  prove that socialisation depends, albeit only to a limited extent, on the choice of travelling alone or with one travel buddy or more.  $R_3$  is negative: this means that the bigger the group, the lower the socialisation with the locals.  $R_4$  is instead positive, meaning that the bigger the group, the higher the socialisation with other travellers. Plus, among those who affirmed to have socialised with other travellers, 89% of the respondents indicated that they interacted with other European travellers, 48% had contacts with extra-European tourists, while 41% socialised with people from their own country<sup>79</sup>. In sum, the tendency to socialise with locals is higher in solo travellers; socialisation with other travellers appears to be more of a group thing; and Interrailers interacted for the most part with fellow European backpackers.

### *3.1.2 Culture shock, familiar and safe atmosphere and evaluation of the trip*

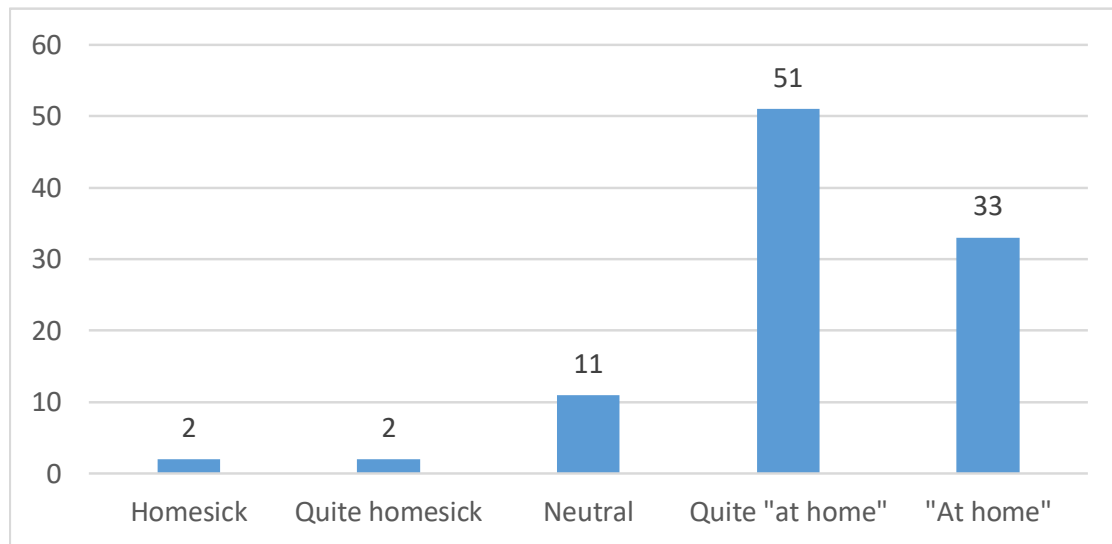
66% of the respondents reported to have experienced, while visiting one of their destinations, a (minor) culture shock<sup>80</sup> – differences which range from the cleanliness of a country to the good (or bad) quality of public transportation; from the open-mindedness of people to their coldness; from the cost of living to the amount of historical buildings.

<sup>79</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100 since respondents could select more than one answer.

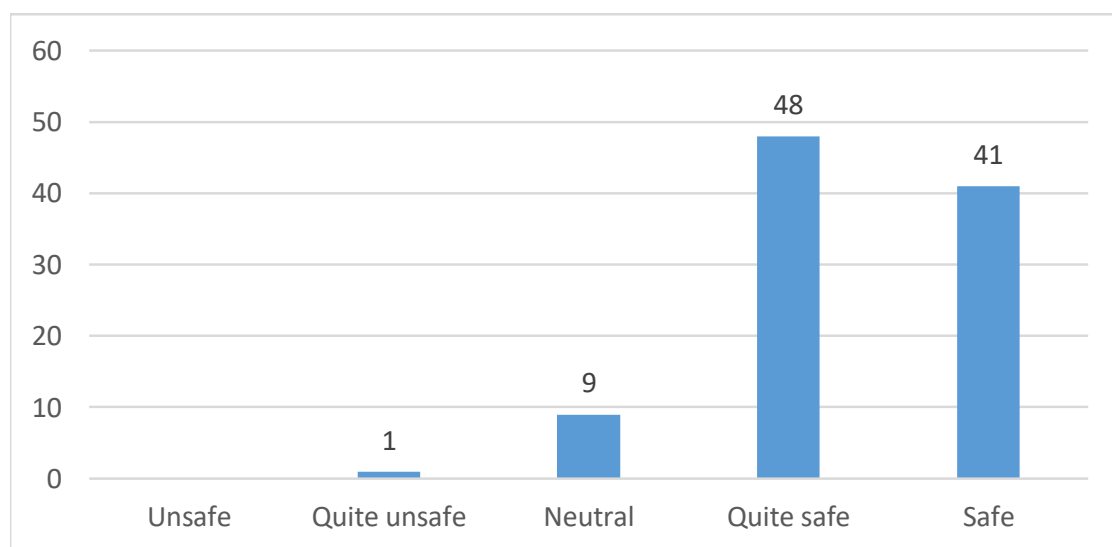
<sup>80</sup> An in-depth analysis of culture shock in tourism contexts can be found in Furnham's 'Tourism and Culture Shock' (1984).

Notwithstanding, if we look into how Interrailers were feeling while traveling, we obtain the following overviews:

While apparently contradictory, the previous data can be interpreted in this way: no matter how striking the differences between the visited countries and



GRAPH 4. Q16a: Overall, during your whole Interrail trip, you were feeling...



GRAPH 5. Q16b: Overall, during your whole Interrail trip, you were feeling...

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

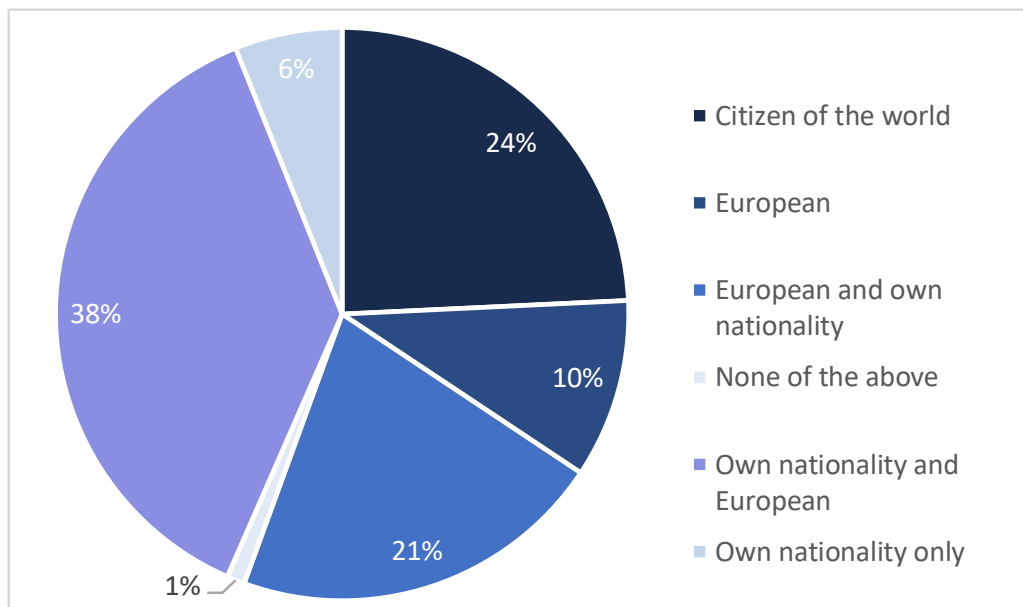
Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire "Interrail", University of Groningen, 2019

their home country, participants were mostly feeling in a rather familiar and safe environment. Besides, the average level of satisfaction of the respondents with their Interrail trip is extremely high, and namely it amounts to 4.8 out of 5.

### 3.2 European identity and solidarity

Shifting the focus to the issue of self-identity, Graph 6 illustrates how participants have self-categorised themselves when confronted with the elements of national identity, Europeanness and cosmopolitanism:

If we comprehensively consider the percentage of Interrailers that, at least partially, identify with Europe, 69% of respondents recognize that to some extent they feel European. Of course, we cannot ignore that 24% of the respondents have



GRAPH 6. Q19: How would you best describe yourself?

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire "Interrail", University of Groningen, 2019

a 'cosmopolitan self-identity', which oversteps Europe's boundaries, and that, more importantly, 6% of the participants do not feel European at all.

#### 3.2.1 The Europeans portrayed by the Interrailers

As anticipated, the questionnaire was meant to collect qualitative data as well. Namely, question Q18 required the respondents to formulate a brief description of a 'typical' European person. This question was meant to complement the measurement of the dimensions of European identity proposed in the subsequent questions (Q21a, Q21b, Q22), since, being European identity a nebulous concept, the indicators produced through its operationalization were in all likelihood not exhaustive. In the attempt to draw a comprehensive portrait, the arguments used to describe a typical European person have been classified and counted. The category of *open-mindedness* includes all those arguments like "open", "open-

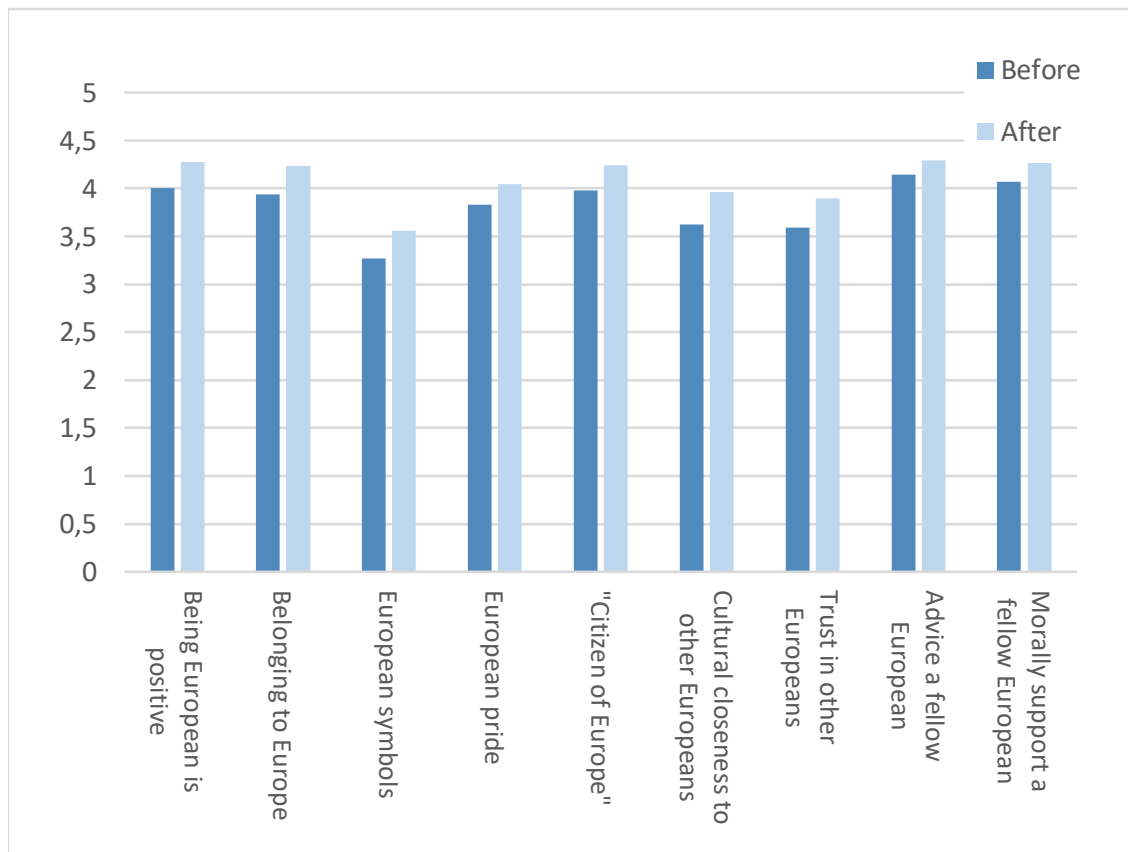
mindful”, “tolerant”. Under the label of *culture*, we instead find the awareness of other cultures; curiosity; high level of education; the capacity to speak multiple languages; multiculturalism; and historical conscience. *Friendliness and sociability* refer to those arguments like “kind” and “outgoing”. *Solidarity* is the category in which we find helpfulness, hospitality and orientation towards the community. *Mobility* indicates the tendency to travel a lot, especially outside the home country, as well as borders’ progressive loss of meaning. We can then identify as *political attributes* the arguments related to freedom, democracy and activeness in society. “*United in diversity*” is a category that puts together the position of those who think that, despite national diversities and national pride, a European person is able to recognize that Europe has a shared history and culture. Finally, *geography* refers to those comments in which the Europeans have been described as mere “inhabitants of the European space”, while the meaning of the category *physical characteristics* is self-evident.

*Graph 7* represents the outcome of Q18 categorised as previously explained. As a side note, if the same type of argument appeared more than once in the same answer, it was counted only once.

According to this graph, the Europeans have been described mostly in terms of open-mindedness, interest in culture and sociability. In this visual representation, however, those who could not come up with any description have been excluded. If we take into account their answers, the reasons that justify this impossibility are multiple: some participants affirmed that most people identify with their own nationalities rather than with Europe; while others underlined the fact that diversity between the peoples of Europe is too high to formulate a unified description.

### 3.2.2 Indicators of European identity before and after Interrail

Once having let the participants express what ‘European’ means in their view, we measured the concept of European identity as operationalized on the basis of Sigalas and May’s work. The participants had to indicate how much they agreed with specific statements concerning Europe and Europeanness in relation to how



GRAPH 8. Q21a/b: Think of yourself and how you were feeling before/after your Interrail trip. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following sentences...

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

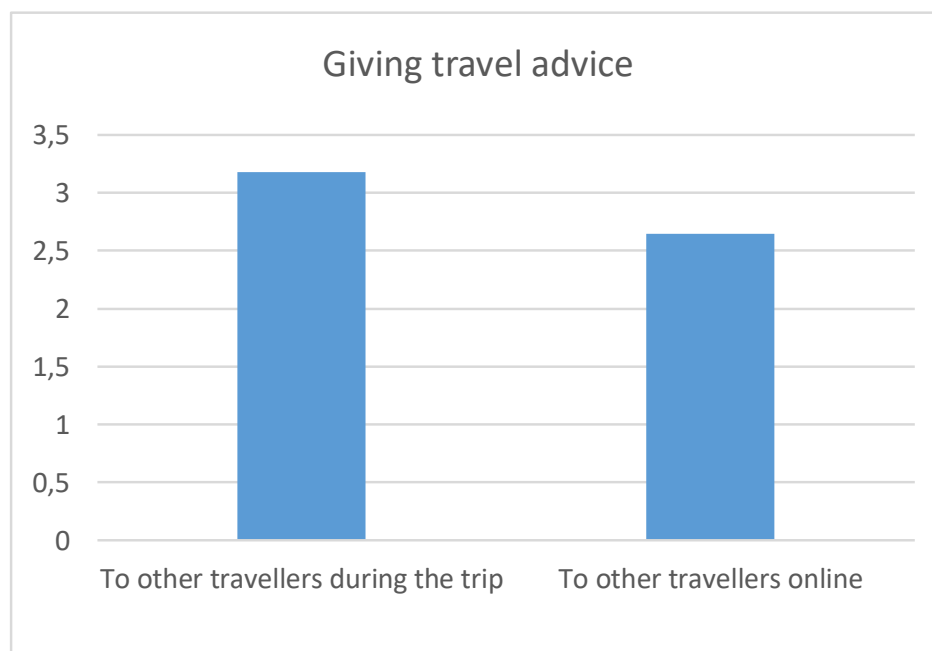
Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire "Interrail", University of Groningen, 2019

they were feeling before and after their Interrail trip. *Graph 8* displays the average rate of agreement with each sentence before the trip and after it.

Already at a first sight the averages differ and, more specifically, the rate of agreement appears to be higher for each statement after the travellers have come back home. To be sure of the statistical significance of such a difference, we executed a Student's t-test to compare the averages of each pair of variables: after doing so, we can affirm that in all cases the average of a given indicator after Interrail was significantly higher than before Interrail, since the p-value was always smaller than the chosen alpha (0.05). This indicates that, according to what the Interrailers have self-reported, Interrail has on average strengthened our sample's European identity other things considered equal. The results of Q20 – which was solely displayed to that 69% feeling to some extent European (*Graph 6*) – further corroborate this thesis, considering that 96% affirmed that Interrail is among the experiences that may have increased their sense of belonging to Europe.

### 3.2.3 Specific indicators of European solidarity

While the participants' attitude towards solidarity could be grasped from the last two indicators of *Graph 8* – the level of willingness both to give advice and to morally support fellow Europeans in need – this dimension of European identity

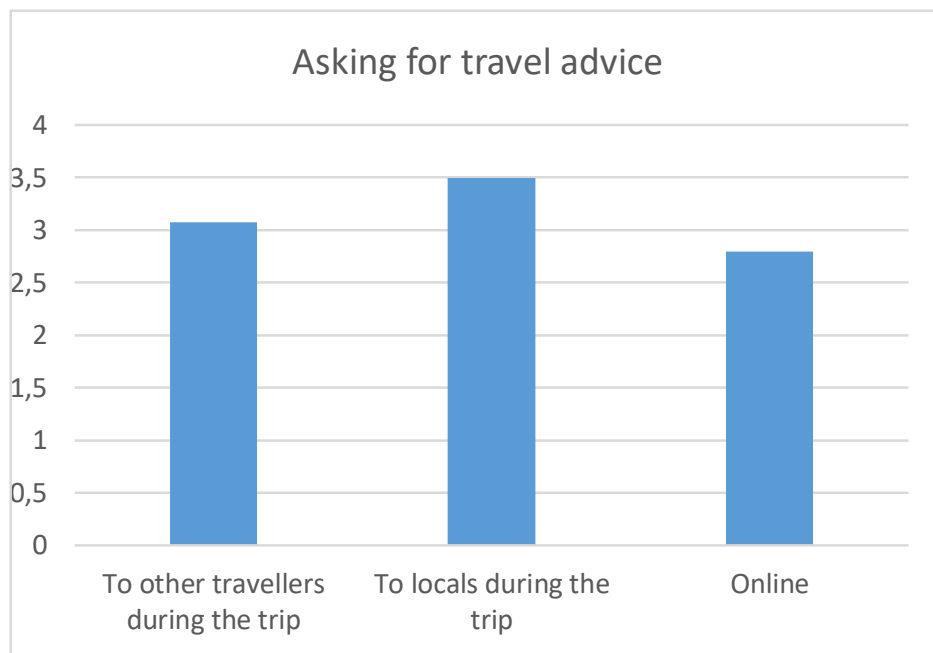


GRAPH 9. Q22: Have you ever found yourself in the situation of...

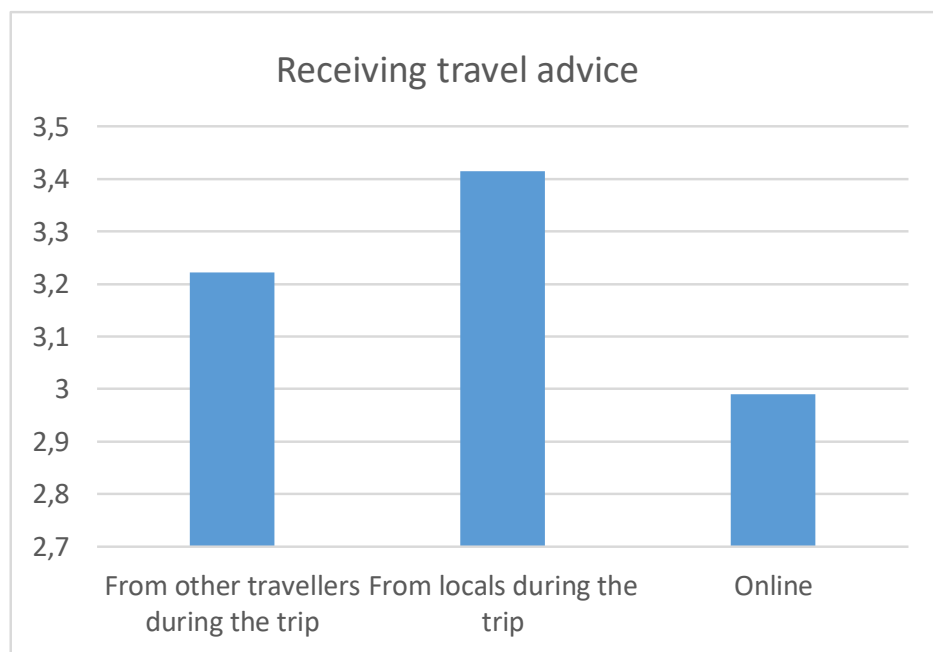
deserved a more specific question. The bar charts below illustrate the average



frequency with which the respondents have behaved in a solidary way to other Europeans (*Graph 9*), as well as how often they have asked for (*Graph 10*) and received (*Graph 11*) solidary actions while planning or during their travels.



GRAPH 10. Q22: Have you ever found yourself in the situation of...



GRAPH 11. Q22: Have you ever found yourself in the situation of...

Basis: 99 participants in the questionnaire

Source: Qualtrics, Questionnaire "Interrail", University of Groningen, 2019

A first remark is that solidary exchanges seem to happen more frequently in real life than online. Secondly, on average only sometimes the respondents have found themselves giving out suggestions to other travellers. Likewise, only sometimes they have asked for or received advice from other backpackers. In a way, we see a certain reciprocity in solidary exchanges between travellers in real life. Eventually, in the situation of asking and receiving travel advice, the locals of a certain country appear to be a more established point of reference than other travellers.

### 3.3 Discover EU: an attempt to foster the European youth's commitment as EU citizens?

Although only 20% of the sample affirmed to have been sponsored by Discover EU initiative, some interesting observations can be made on this small group of respondents. While a non-negligible 30% of these very young travellers identify themselves as citizens of the world, 65% feel they belong both to Europe and to their own country; only one respondent (5%) has instead indicated that he or she only feels attached to his or her homeland. Out of this 65% of respondents who recognize an element of Europeanness in their identity, 92% declared that Interrail has reinforced their identification with Europe – for reasons which range from the experience of an easy way travelling “only with IDs”, to the feeling of “community”; from the possibility to finally understand “what Europe and EU mean” to the realization that, despite the differences, we share a common history and culture.

Since strengthening “European cohesion and integration” is among the key objectives of Free Interrail<sup>81</sup>, which constitutes the basis of Discover EU, the answers received in our questionnaire are consistent with this purpose. While it is a long shot saying that Interrail can foster the European youth's commitment as EU citizens, “the transformative potential of cross-border people mobility signifies a window of opportunity for the European Union ... that cannot be ignored”<sup>82</sup> – and, indeed, Discover EU proves that the Union is well aware of this. As we can read in the initiative's official website:

*“There is more to our proposal than free train tickets. We see this as an investment in young people and in Europe's future. It reinforces the main aim of the European Union: to bring people together. We want young Europeans to discover the EU is also about emotions, not just politics. We*

<sup>81</sup> ‘FAQ’, #FreeInterrail – Moving Europe Forward, last accessed 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <http://freeinterrail.eu/faq/>.

<sup>82</sup> Sigalas, ‘Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity’, 242.

*want to give them a taste of what it feels like, not only to be Slovak, German or Greek, but also European. And what better way than by taking the train?”*<sup>83</sup>

It is therefore of great interest to keep observing how Discover EU will evolve in the next few years and monitor its long-term achievements.

## 4 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine how Interrail influences the (re)construction of European identity of Interrailers, with a focus on the dimension of solidarity among Europeans. Through the questionnaire that was elaborated and distributed to former travellers, we came to a conclusion: within our sample, Interrail was able to strengthen the sense of identification with Europe of the vast majority who experienced it (§ 3.2.2). As for solidarity, no before *vs.* after question was formulated, so we are not able to affirm that there has been a change in the participants' solidary behaviour. Plus, we only investigated solidarity in the context of mobility and we did not ask any specific question about solidarity towards other Europeans. However, the fact that Interrailers mostly interacted with European backpackers (§ 3.1.1) lets us suppose that their positive – albeit lukewarm – commitment to solidarity (*graphs 9, 10 and 11*) was by and large directed towards other Europeans.

However, this research presents some limits which must be acknowledged – first and foremost the way in which European identity has been operationalised. Despite the solidity of our conceptual and theoretical framework, we recognise that even a slightly different operationalisation might have led to very different results. Plus, the meaning that 'Europe' and 'European' should have in the questionnaire was not made clear: while the distinction 'Europe *vs.* EU' was addressed in this paper (§ 1.2), in retrospective we should have asked, following the example of Bruter, if respondents felt attached to Europe or, rather, to the European Union to better interpret their message.<sup>84</sup>

The choice and formulation of the questions have also proved problematic in some respects. The fact that no pre-test could be carried out forced us to include a before *vs.* after question about the relation between Interrail and Europeanness, in order to identify possible changes in the processes of self-identification. Nonetheless, we cannot be sure that the participants really remember how they were feeling before their trip. We have to take into account that some might have answered in a certain way because they thought they were expected to show a

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<sup>83</sup> 'FAQ', #DiscoverEU, last accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <http://www.youdiscover.eu/faq>.

<sup>84</sup> Bruter, *ibid.*, 35.

stronger European identity after Interrail. This might have caused a certain distortion in the measurements.

Another issue is constituted by the angle of observation of the present research. We assumed that and tested whether Interrail (independent variable) has the potential to foster the European identity (dependent variable) of the Interrailers. Nonetheless, we have fallen short to consider that the opposite relation might also be true, namely that it is exactly because one is a self-identified European that he or she might choose to undertake an Interrail trip. This possibility could have been addressed by introducing a pre-test – which would have allowed us to measure the effective levels of Europeaness before and after the travelling, and see whether the ‘Interrailers-to-be’ already feel European prior to their trip – and a control group – to compare the self-reported Europeaness of those planning to do Interrail (treatment group) with that of people having no such trip foreseen (control group). In any case, even if it was found that Interrail is an activity chosen mainly by those who already feel European to a certain extent, this would not exclude that Interrail has the power to boost this feeling. Hence, while this counter perspective should have been taken into account, it does not make our results any less valid.

Furthermore, greater attention should have been devoted to solidarity, whose study was not as in-depth as envisaged, being the questionnaire already very long – the longer the questionnaire, the lower the rate of completion.<sup>85</sup>

Eventually, we should not forget the limited size of our sample, and that this pre-experimental design allows no generalisability. Notwithstanding, this work might serve as a starting point for further research on cross-border mobility and European identity. In the light of the results obtained here, it seems relevant that an improved version of this study is replicated in the future, perhaps with a focus on Discover EU beneficiaries, given the importance reserved to the youth and mobility in the EU agenda.

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<sup>85</sup> Michael J. Roszkowski and Andrew G. Bean, ‘Believe It or Not! Longer Questionnaires Have Lower Response Rates’, *Journal of Business and Psychology* 4, no. 4 (1990): 495.

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# Wealth Inequality and Fictional TV Content in Serbia

*Nemanja Milošević*

## 1 Introduction

The question of rising inequality in the world has dominated political discourse in the last couple of years, due to the undoubtedly rising global wealth inequality and partly due to the shift in the political spectrum of many Western countries, where the rise of populist and extremist political options have been explained as the result of the lower standard of living of the masses. In this paper I will deal with political measure that contributed to inequality in Serbia and the way they are represented and justified in the content of a fictional TV show.

Guy Debord points out that we live in the *society of spectacle*, and that we use image to articulate our political ideology, moreover, for him the consumption of the image is the acme of ideology.<sup>1</sup> Popular culture and image play a significant role in the way we understand our society and our role in the social structure and my goal here is to identify that process of communication in the case of a TV show that deals with topics that are given a lot of attention in the public discourse in Serbia. A TV series from Serbia, *Code Despot (Šifra Despot)*, has been selected for the analysis.

The road towards the social problems Serbia faces right now started during the political changes and following the end of the Milosevic era, after the year

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<sup>1</sup> Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 1983), 117.



2000. Although the process of privatization that was supposed to mark the transition from socialist to free market economy was supposed to lead towards the growth of the economy, employment, welfare, its effects were quite the opposite. In the first few years, the GDP of Serbia grew 5%, but with it the inequality and unemployment grew at the same time.<sup>2</sup> This all led to a big gap in wealth inequality in Serbia. The Gini coefficient (which measures income inequality in a certain country) for Serbia is one of the largest in all of Europe.<sup>3</sup> The coefficient for Serbia peaked in 2016 when it was 11, which means that the 20% of the population with the highest income on average earns 11 times more than the bottom 20% of the population. For comparison, the Gini coefficient for the United States, the country known for a big gap in earnings and large social stratification, is 8.3, much smaller than that in Serbia.<sup>4</sup> Around 40% of the working population in Serbia has earnings lower than the legal minimum wage (which is around 230 Euros) and only 10% of the population is able to provide itself the average consumer basket (used to define the Consumer Price Index, and for Serbia marks around 550 Euros)<sup>5</sup>.

The series and their episodes were chosen on the basis of their suitability to be analyzed and discussed in the light of the ideology they may represent and promote regarding the wealth inequality. Thus the main question here is as follows: How are socio-economic politics and policies reflected upon in light of the rising inequality in Serbia and represented in the TV series *Code Despot* (*Šifra Despot*).

## 2 Media in Serbia

*Code Despot* (*Šifra Despot*) is a comedy TV show of a 40-minute format that was first aired on the Serbian television network *Pink* in February 2018.<sup>6</sup> What makes this TV show important is the fact that its author, Radoš Bajić, decided to leave the national TV broadcaster RTS, where he was in charge of a hit show called *The village is burning, but Grandma just combs her hair* (*Selo gori, a baba se češlja*). The previous show was an instant hit with the Serbian audience, getting the prime slot in the schedule and ranking as the most-watched program almost

<sup>2</sup> Matija Jovanović, "Lice i naličje srpskog neoliberala," *Mašina*, June 17, 2016, accessed May 3, 2019, <http://www.masina.rs/?p=2930>.

<sup>3</sup> "Income Quintile Share Ratio (S80/S20) by Sex," *Eurostat*, April 25, 2019, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tessi180&plugin=1>.

<sup>4</sup> Maja Krek, "Šta znači 'prosečna zarada' ako je većina nema?" *Peščanik*, January 4, 2018, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://pescanik.net/sta-znaci-prosecna-zarada-ako-je-vecina-nema/>.

<sup>5</sup> Krek, "Šta znači 'prosečna zarada' ako je većina nema?"

<sup>6</sup> Radoš Bajić, *Šifra Despot*, directed by Radoš Bajić (Belgrade: Contrast Studio and RTV Pink, 2018), TV Pink.

every week. It plays on a form of comedy that is accessible to all social strata, departing from the tradition in the production of TV series in Serbia that usually takes place in Belgrade and deals with issues familiar to urban audiences.

It was later announced that the director was moving to the commercial TV station *Pink*, where he would write and produce a different show, which is the object of this analysis. The TV station *Pink* has been the single most successful and dominant TV outlet since the year 2000 in Serbia. Its owner, Željko Mitrović, started his career as a media mogul in the 1990s when he was politically associated with the ruling SPS and JUL, and was widely known for his friendship with Mira Marković, the wife of the dictator Slobodan Milošević.

After the newly formed party Srpska Napredna Stranka (SNS), the party that in 2019 is still on power, got the majority and took over the government in 2012, his TV stations became immediately affiliated with the ruling party and started acting as a propaganda medium for SNS and its president, Aleksandar Vučić, the current president of Serbia. Complete support for the party was evident in the reporting of the TV station *Pink*, which was dedicated to the constant and unrestrained praises of the party and its leader, but also because of the ruthless attacks against anyone who ever opposes anything that government does, or says anything critical about the government.<sup>7</sup> The frequent campaigns of personal attacks towards the political opposition got out of hand when the TV station played a video segment shamelessly bashing a Serbian politician in Kosovo, Oliver Ivanović, who was challenging the party supported by the SNS in the elections. The video painted Ivanović as a traitor to the Serbian people and someone who does not care about people in Kosovo. Ivanović got assassinated shortly after and it is still unknown who the author of the video is or who ordered it.<sup>8</sup>

The ruling party and its leader have no problem with openly affiliating themselves with the TV network *Pink* or admitting the close connections they have to it. The party leader, Vučić, has said the following regarding the controversial TV *Pink*:

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<sup>7</sup> Jovanka Matić as one of the numerous problems of media in Serbia in the era of the party SNS lists "Choosing tabloid media to distribute most important information from the government, and at the same time making the whole media spectrum more sensationalistic, lowering general professional standards and legitimizing unethical public speech and hate speech, especially towards those who are critically oriented towards the regime". She continues to explain that these tabloid media that are supported (financially and politically) by the ruling party are orchestrating ruthless attacks on independent institutions, opposition parties and their leaders, independent media and journalists, civil society, etc. TV *Pink* is listed as one of the most aggressive pro-regime media in the country: Jovanka Matić, "Medijska politika vlasti SNS-a u Srbiji 2014-2018. godine" in *Zbornik u čast Prof. Dr Dubravki Valić Nedeljković*, ed. Dejan Pralica (Novi Sad: Filozofski Fakultet Novi Sad, 2018), 63-64.

<sup>8</sup> Jovana Štetin Lakić, "Đurić izbegava odgovore na pitanja o spotu u kojem je blaćen Oliver Ivanović," *NI*, January 16, 2019, accessed May 4, 2019, <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a452424/Djuric-o-spotu-protiv-Olivera-Ivanovica.html>.

There is only one private TV station that supports the work done by the government. That is *Pink* and they have every right to do so. I think that everyone has the right to express their opinion, those are European values. It is the same for Željko Mitrović (TV station's owner, prim.aut.), Dragan Vučićević (one of *Pink*'s editors, prim.aut.) and Peconi (owner of another pro-SNS TV station, *Happy TV*, prim.aut.). Everyone has the right to say whatever they want.<sup>9</sup>

The tendency of the ruling party to take over complete control of the media in Serbia is also recognized by *Freedom House*, that in the report from 2019 moved Serbia from the *Free* category to *Partly Free*. The report explains that this change is due to “the continued attempts by the government and allied media outlets to undermine independent journalists through legal harassment and smear campaigns”.<sup>10</sup> Media is controlled legally and by using public institutions to harass them (one common example is selectively succumbing certain media to constant tax audits), thus making sure that on the surface media look free while making their everyday operations difficult.<sup>11</sup>

While there is an effort to explain and contextualize the relationship between media, the government and the tendency to control oppositional media by organizing smear campaigns and manufacturing false information, there is a lack of overview of how and if that translates into fiction (into the *entertainment* segments of the media). In this paper, I will look at how and to what extent the political project of the ruling party is reflected in the fictional content of the TV station closely affiliated with the current president of Serbia and the current ruling party (without implying that the content is directly dictated and controlled by the political elites).

### 3 Theoretical and methodological framework

Means of communication are for Louis Althusser part of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) (as opposed to the Repressive State Apparatus, which aims to impose ideology by force or violence). The ISA uses ‘soft power’ as a means to impose ideological positions. The ideology can in this way be conveyed through institutions such as churches, political parties, trade unions, families, schools, etc. Althusser also identifies the communications ISA, mainly constituted by press,

<sup>9</sup> Tim Istinomera, “Pink ima sva prava da me podržava,” *Istinomer*, February 8, 2016, accessed May 4, 2019, <https://www.istinomer.rs/ocena/3326/Pink-ima-sva-prava-da-me-podrzava>.

<sup>10</sup> Brandt Christopher et al., *Freedom in the World 2019* (Washington D.C.: Freedom House, 2019), 13. [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Feb2019\\_FH\\_FITW\\_2019\\_Report\\_ForWeb-compressed.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Feb2019_FH_FITW_2019_Report_ForWeb-compressed.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Maja Zivanovic, “Serbian Media Outlet Accuses Tax Office of Harassment,” *Balkan Insight*, April 17, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/04/17/journalists-accuse-serbian-tax-administration-of-pressures-04-16-2018/>

radio, and television.<sup>12</sup> Popular culture, as a crucial part of the press, radio and television production, is a very useful and powerful method of producing and enacting ideological struggle and hegemony, whether neoliberal or of any other ideological stance.

The analyzed content will be approached using the conceptualization of popular culture of Stuart Hall, who explains it as a place where ideological struggle happens, where dominant and subordinate groups meet and express their interests. Depending on resources and tactics, some social groups may be more successful and represent their interests at the expense of other social groups.<sup>13</sup> The goal here is to determine to what extent the State Apparatus in Serbia is able to establish its interests as dominant, in this case through the content of the TV show.

In order to determine the dominant interests in Serbia, I will use discourse analysis. Discourse is understood as “a set of meaning, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events”<sup>14</sup>, although there are many other possible versions. Discourse explains the phenomena of the world to us, it claims to be the truth and presents certain knowledge as the only possible order of things.<sup>15</sup>

To summarize, there will several steps taken in order to analyze and identify the way current inequality in Serbia is positioned and represented in the popular culture content:

1. Identify the main features of the political discourse that is dominant in Serbia and the ideological position of the state apparatus, in the way they reinforce wealth inequality. This will be done by analyzing primary (scientific articles and publications) and secondary materials (media reports).
2. Analyze what features of the discourse are present in the TV series and how does it relate directly to the policies, ideological stances, and strategies of the political elites. I will be using qualitative content analysis and only content that is relevant to the previously identified discourse will be taken into consideration.

## 4 Contemporary Socio-Economic Conditions in Serbia

The current eclectic ideological and political spectrum of Serbia can be explained in the shortest possible way by the fact that there is an absolute absence of any

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<sup>12</sup> Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 142-5.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘the Popular’,” in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, ed. John Storey (Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall, 1998), 449.

<sup>14</sup> Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 64.

<sup>15</sup> Burr, 65.

left-wing political option and political ideas in general<sup>16</sup>, regardless of the fact that the so-called Socialist Party of Serbia has formed part of every government since 2008. The deterioration of social conditions and services was followed and guided by the process of accession to the EU, which has market liberalization as one of its primary principles, and by the corrupted institutions and officials in Serbia. This led to a situation in which every political decision is made only having in mind the direct interests of the political elites. These decisions were often justified and explained as something benefiting the country and the people.

The race of the current political structure in Serbia to promote the domestic workforce as incredibly cheap, but competent, and at the same time resilient to any harsh and inhuman working conditions imposed on them<sup>17</sup>, was according to the government meant to increase employment and on a long run improve the living conditions of people and the competitiveness of the country in the global market. The transition towards the free-market and privatization is presented as something of national importance and it is crucial that the whole country stands together and go through few harsh years so we can enjoy the benefits of the transition later.

Besides living in unbearable conditions with almost no opportunity for social mobility, the working class in Serbia often faces complete neglect by the state when being subjected to humiliation and inhuman treatment by domestic and foreign companies. One such case reported by the independent media in Serbia was that of the South Korean-owned company *Jura*. The trade union *Sloga* reported that workers in the company were beaten with metal sticks, have no right to a day off during the week, whilst women were sexually assaulted, toilet breaks are forbidden and employees are advised to wear diapers, and if someone faints from overwork, an ambulance is called to the factory, but the worker has to continue working right after the ambulance leaves.<sup>18</sup> Workers and trade unions reported abuses to the responsible authorities, but nothing was ever done, demonstrating that the state may deliberately ignore the situation while being perfectly informed about it. Moreover, this company receives 10.000 Euros per workplace from the state as part of the subventions, for every worker that receives minimum wage.<sup>19</sup> Similar abuses have been reported elsewhere around the country; those that received the most media attention included one involving the Italian shoe company *Geox*, where the local ambulance reported receiving an alarming number of calls

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<sup>17</sup> In the advertisement video titled “Invest in Serbia”, produced by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia to be shown on the TV station CNN, as one of the reasons to invest in Serbia lists “High-skilled, low-cost workers”. The video is available on this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEpUrhGvBo0>, accessed May 26, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Lj. Bukvić, “Ne daju im da idu u toalet, teraju ih da nose pelene,” *Danas*, April 27, 2016, accessed May 4, 2019, <https://www.danas.rs/ekonomija/ne-daju-im-da-idu-u-toalet-teraju-ih-da-nose-pelene/>.

<sup>19</sup> Bukvić, “Ne daju im da idu u toalet, teraju ih da nose pelene“.

from the factory<sup>20</sup>, another concerning the state changing labor laws to make it more difficult for workers of a Chinese company to go on a sick leave<sup>21</sup>, and a case of a cancer patient being fired while on a sick leave.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, had only one response to these accusations; people ought to keep it quiet because all these reports will scare investors away.<sup>23</sup>

Concerns for the consequences of the rapid neoliberalization are expressed by many political analysts and activists, including Aleksandar Matkovic from the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade, who compares the current economic and social policies dominant in Serbia with the ones promoted and employed by Margaret Thatcher.<sup>24</sup>

The economic model is based on the complete destruction and abandonment of the domestic market and economy, for the sake of boosting foreign investment by providing large subventions to foreign companies<sup>25</sup> (the subventions given to each company would be based on the number of persons employed, they range between 2.000 and 10.000 Euros per worker employed, so that foreign companies basically get free workforce for several years<sup>26</sup>). The dominant narrative in the country is that job creation has to happen at any human, social or economic cost, and everyone who attempts to point out negative consequences of that policy is labeled by the dominant political elites and media as someone who is against the progress and prosperity of the country, or in some cases, as anti-patriotic<sup>27</sup>, and the word *investments* became part of every media report and speech of any politician on power.

<sup>20</sup> Saša Dragojlo, "Kolika je prava cena Geoxovih cipela?" *Mašina*, November 29, 2016, accessed May 4, 2019, <http://www.masina.rs/?p=3622>.

<sup>21</sup> G. Vlaović, "Kinezi i vlada dogovorili pritisak na lekare radnika?" *Danas*, October 6, 2017, accessed May 4, 2019, <https://www.danas.rs/ekonomija/kinezi-i-vlada-dogovorili-pritisak-na-lekare-radnika/>.

<sup>22</sup> Toma Todorović, "Otkaz radnici 'Jure' oboleloj od raka," *Politika*, December 1, 2016, accessed May 4, 2019, <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/369083/Otkaz-radnici-na-bolovanju>.

<sup>23</sup> "Vučić: lično ću razgovarati sa radnicima i vlasnicima Jure," *Politika*, April 29, 2016, accessed May 4, 2019, <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/354033/Ekonomija/Vucic-Licno-cu-razgovarati-sa-radnicima-i-vlasnicima-Jure>.

<sup>24</sup> Branislav Krivokapić and Aleksandar Matković, "Vučić i Đilas – Dva lica neoliberalizma," *Beogradski Glas*, February 2019, accessed May 3, 2019, <http://beogradski-glas.rs/ekonomija/vucic-i-djilas-dva-lica-neoliberalizma/>.

<sup>25</sup> Krivokapić and Matković, "Vučić i Đilas – Dva lica neoliberalizma".

<sup>26</sup> "Privilegije za investitore, nebriga za radnike," *Insajder*, June 07, 2017, accessed May 27, 2019, <https://insajder.net/sr/sajt/tema/5149/>.

<sup>27</sup> Notable example is the case of the state-owned magazine *Ilustrovana Politika*, that published the six pages long article *Dogs are Released (Psi su pusteni)*, where the author accused the independent media of hostile actions against the state, with the list of media that publish critical articles towards the government. The article caused outrage as it put certain individuals in danger by portraying them as foreign secret agents and traitors. The article has been removed from the web page of the magazine, but the review is available in: Branka Trivić and Branka Mihajlović, "Kada iz državnih medija pozivaju na linč novinara," *Slobodna Evropa*, October 31, 2018, accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija-mediji-linc/29575412.html>.

Personal engagement as a tool for overcoming the social problems is dominant in the policies of the prime minister, Ana Brnabić. For her, the desirable future of the country is in information technology. During the inauguration of the Innovative Laboratory in Belgrade, she claimed that Serbia will invest 65 million Euros for the infrastructure of the IT sector in Serbia, she said, “if there is any place in Serbia that portrays our the potential and how Serbia should look like in the future, it is this place”<sup>28</sup>. The idea here is that the social and economic mobility is made possible, and people should take advantage of it by investing in the education (but only in education that is profitable, like the IT).<sup>29</sup>

As a conclusion, the dominant discourse regarding inequality is based on several features:

1. Market liberalization is imminent and the only possible path for the development of the economy, and foreign investments play a crucial role.<sup>30</sup> Privatization and liberalization are seen and explained as part of the EU accession and transition from socialism to capitalism, although they represent a very large field for corruption for local elites.<sup>31</sup>
2. There are grave consequences of such politics, which include the highest inequality rate in Europe and major social problems, that are pushed under the carpet and people are asked to endure this period for the benefits that will come in a few years.<sup>32</sup>
3. This process is of a national interest, there should be no division among people about this, and anyone who is against these policies is also against the country.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> “Brnabić: U naredne tri godine 65 miliona evra u IT sektor,” *Blic*, April 19, 2018, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.blic.rs/biznis/brnabic-u-naredne-tri-godine-65-miliona-evra-u-it-sektor/klccn0x>.

<sup>29</sup> Government offered free crash courses in programming in order to boost employment, the course was offered to people registered as unemployed. The program was not successful as only 17% of participants got a job afterward and was terminated. More about it here: “Do posla samo 17%: kraj za it prekvalifikacije,” *B92*, January 8, 2019, accessed May 27, 2019, [https://www.b92.net/biz/vesti/it-biz.php?yyyy=2019&mm=01&dd=08&nav\\_id=1490493](https://www.b92.net/biz/vesti/it-biz.php?yyyy=2019&mm=01&dd=08&nav_id=1490493).

<sup>30</sup> Jovanović, “Lice i naličje srpskog neoliberalala”.

<sup>31</sup> Goran Maričić, “Korupcija i privatizacija,” *Godišnjak Fakulteta pravnih nauka* 3, no. 3 (2013): 227.

<sup>32</sup> “Vučić: Stisnimo zube, radimo vredno i strpimo se samo dve godine,” *Blic*, October 09, 2014, accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/vucic-stisnimo-zube-radimo-vredno-i-strpimo-se-samo-dve-godine/xsk1jg9>.

<sup>33</sup> In the following articles by government-friendly media outlets, political actors and activists who said anything negative regarding the working conditions of people, government social policies and policies in general, are accused of causing the division among people, scaring investors away and therefore encourage unemployment:

“Đilasov I Obradovićev Sindikalac Tera investitore iz Knjaževca – 900 RADNIKA STRAHUJE ZA POSAO!” *Srbija Danas*, December 29, 2017, accessed May 28, 2019, <https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/beogradski-izbori/dilasov-i-obradovicev-sindikalac-tera-investitore-iz-knjazevca-900-radnika-strahuje-za-posao-2017-12-29?page=1&fbclid=IwAR1MaLYPekGGxEr8mRs-Bgi6m7rGbcXhcvGj6J58OmT1W2PPYF5jZGBS3rc0>; “SNS: DS lažima tera investitore,” *Blic*, November 25, 2015, accessed May 28, 2019, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/sns-ds-lazima-tera>.

4. Beforementioned grave consequences could be avoided by adapting to the changing labor market, for example, by going into the IT sector. Individual initiative, such as entrepreneurship, is promoted and desired.

## 5 Code Despot

The series *Code Despot* revolves around Despot, a young guy in his late 20's more or less, and his rather rural family. Despot is a programmer who has his own little home-based company, and works on the creation and maintenance of programs, networks, and many other things related to the field of information technology (although in the TV show, his work outfit and the tools he works with could be associated more with the home repair than computer work). He lives with his parents in a neighborhood in Belgrade, although the house and surroundings look more rural than an average neighborhood in the capital, which may correspond with the identity assigned to his parents. His parents leave the impression of a rural, older couple (they both have accents that are not from the capital), taking care of the goat in the backyard and with nothing more to do in their lives. Despot leaves an impression of being a bit more of urban type, although the incidents of miscommunication, the behaviors he expresses that are inappropriate for the given situation, tells us that he is pretty much "lost" in a lot of the social situations he is part of, like his parents. The mannerism of family members points to the less intelligent and goofy, but honest and kind individuals<sup>34</sup>.

Every episode revolves around Despot and his job; he goes to many different institutions and companies to work on some computer programs, which usually goes wrong and causes a series of comic situations to unfold. Every episode has more or less the same formula; the episode begins with Despot realizing that he messed up something and someone is looking for him (he is in a lot of trouble). At the beginning of each episode, we get to see how clumsy Despot is, he is mostly late and suffers from constant miscommunication<sup>35</sup>, whether with his family or with the contractor.

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investitore/ 3gg8dde?fbclid=IwAR1ktMRn\_4n9r3IEAtn8CMk\_d9r7t34JmRP8qY4jH\_tjjgod2Sy-GHo7GEOA; N.I., "PROLUPAO! JANKOVIĆ TERA STRANE INVESTITORE IZ SRBIJE: Propali kandidat za predsednika objavio program opozicije," *Informer*, July 19, 2018, accessed May 28, 2019, [https://informer.rs/vesti/politika/389876/prolupao-jankovic-tera-strane-investitore-srbije-propali-kandidat-predsednika-objavio-program-opozicije?fbclid=IwAR0WAMcf6S\\_xHnWaHXtFYq03CvzzVoQNR23D429K\\_yk4Jo0SqiW4-9mJR4](https://informer.rs/vesti/politika/389876/prolupao-jankovic-tera-strane-investitore-srbije-propali-kandidat-predsednika-objavio-program-opozicije?fbclid=IwAR0WAMcf6S_xHnWaHXtFYq03CvzzVoQNR23D429K_yk4Jo0SqiW4-9mJR4).

<sup>34</sup> Scott Sedita identifies 8 usual characters of sitcoms, and the one that can be used to explain the members of the family is *The Dumb One*. One example of such character would be Joey from the TV show *Friends*. Some of the characteristics of these type of characters are childlike, excited, genuine, good-natured, naïve: Scott Sedita, *The Eight Characters of Comedy: A Guide to Sitcom Acting and Writing* (Los Angeles, CA: Atides Publishing, 2014), 98-99.

<sup>35</sup> Miscommunication incidents are historically a very common comedy tool in Serbian television and film. Usually, miscommunication can happen because people come from different areas (urban



The middle and most significant part of the episode happens “on location”, where Despot goes to work or fix the problem he has caused. The problem is usually not always solved; on the contrary, the problem just gets bigger as the episode progresses and Despot has to find a way out of the uncomfortable situation, which leads to many other comedic situations.

For further analysis, I will present the content that reinforces the dominant discourse, in categories that I identified in the previous chapter.

### *Market liberalization and privatization as an imminent processes*

The idea of the market liberalization is present in the series through the everyday life of Despot, who encounters and works for various private entities (he visits one or two clients per episode, there is an abundance of opportunities for Despot to work, there are many private companies and businesses). It is very important to stress that Despot is always in the position to make his life and situation better, there is an abundance of possibilities, projects, and job offers to Despot all throughout the series, and that is how Despot gets in touch with different personality and messes up work (thus failing to get paid and improve his living standard). People who hire Despot include a farm owner, flower shop owners, managers at the winery, spa center owners, etc.

Despot visits the state clinic once, but he does not work for it, and although his father wants to get him a job there (using personal connections), he is informed that that is not possible any longer (corruption is being eradicated is the main premise here, but also that people should not rely on a public sector any longer, which is traditionally one of the most desired employers in Serbia).

#### *Personal sacrifice and endurance for the bright future:*

Despot and his family are characters that are mostly morally right, most comedic (their mannerism is over the top, includes a lot of physical comedy, bodily fluids and they are mostly represented as ‘dumb’, being unable to understand most things).

Despot and his family are naïve and lack of any bad intention. Despot, more specifically, is educated and has a fairly good job, but his lifestyle does not reflect any of that. For someone who has an IT business, his lifestyle is pretty modest. He is constantly on the verge of getting a good deal with a client, which in some cases means getting 3.000 Euros just from one client, but he always loses it due to his clumsiness.

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and rural sociolects), they have different levels of education, age, there is a discrepancy in the intelligence of speakers, some lack common sense and logic, etc. Characters would usually ask someone to repeat something many times or they would get an idea completely different from what the sender of a message intended. These incidents provoke many comedic situations and drive the plot sometimes.

At the end of the day, sometimes disturbed family relations are settled with comedy and it is important to note that the parents are always ready to do everything for their son Despot. Although they expect their son to support them economically with his lucrative job, they do recognize that it is unfair to ask for some money from him as a debt he has to his parents, and family relations prevail over the economic ones.

Despot's parents are unemployed and do not seem to have a very high standard of living, but they are very confident that Despot's business will bring them prosperity. Especially Despot's father is showing a lot of excitement and hope every time there is a chance for Despot to seal a lucrative deal (that can be worth as much as 3.000 Euros). Although the parents are facing financial problems, they know that this period will end with a lot of prosperity when Despot finally gets a contract with some client. They are constantly waiting for the bright future that is repeatedly postponed.

### *Unity and national interests*

This part of the discourse is very prominent in the series. There is a variety of characters on the show in terms of their economic status and class, the nature of their relationship to the Despot's family differs and they are represented differently.

Characters representing domestic clients (owners of businesses), unlike Despot and his family, do not have problems expressing themselves, they are eloquent and without over-the-top mannerisms. They also participate in comedic interactions, and some of the characters are meant to entertain the audience, but it is never based on their lack of common sense or not being able to understand simple conversations, which is the case of Despot and his parents.

For example, the female manager of the winery states that she went to college and got the job right after graduating. She is more or less the same age as Despot, has a similar educational path, but appears more eloquent, is better dressed, and dominates Despot on every level in communication. All the clients that Despot encounters tend to have more control over the situation than he.

The winery where Despot goes to work is on the verge of bankruptcy due to failed leadership and is about to be closed. Regardless of that, the workers are in the festive mood, their manager is having a birthday and the workers got her a present. Everybody is having a good time together, singing and dancing, and workers appear to be friends with the manager. Another example of a harmonious relationship between the superior and his/her employees is seen on the farm that Despot visits, where workers support the owner and join him in chasing Despot, although they have not received the salary for the past several months.

Those that are represented in a very negative light and they are the only characters that could be considered "evil" or having some clear bad intentions are the

characters representing the EU and the Western political organizations (and values). These characters are present in two notable episodes; those are the episode in which Despot goes to seal the deal with the local NGO and a gay organization. Both episodes have almost the same structure, whereby Despot announces that he has the opportunity to work with these two organizations, his father sees it as a chance to get a very good deal and a nice paycheck, and Despot goes to the organization and subsequently encounters some rather sinister personalities.

The first episode is called simply *NGO (Nevladina organizacija)*.<sup>36</sup> Despot and his father, pretending to be his assistant, go to a meeting at the local NGO called *Pokret za Preokret (Movement for the Turnover)* where he will meet the director of the organization, Alois Schott, who is German but speaks broken Serbian. The NGO looks more like a multinational company than a NGO, not only because of the interior design of the office, but because of the way people working there are dressed (smartly and like executives), and because of the way they behave. They communicate in a very poised, calculated way, without much emotion or regard for others. They talk openly about some sinister plans and their connection with and support from the EU and Brussels (there is a general tendency of Serbian media to present the intention of the EU as being *a priori* against Serbia, which is mostly due to its stance and policy regarding Kosovo) and how to get more money through EU projects. Despot is aware of the amount of money circulating in the NGO and tells his father that getting this job could change his and his family's lives forever.

People working in the NGO are thus presented as evil, without any human qualities, and lacking emotions. They are therefore completely opposite from the family, where we have characters that are clumsy, not very smart, but likable. In the NGO, people are not likable, but the way they communicate and behave is not comedic and is not meant to provoke any laughter.<sup>37</sup> To contrast this even further, the lady that works for catering in the NGO encounters Despot's father and immediately likes him. They recognize that they are both a part of the working class (the only time in the series this identification is referred to directly, the lady tells the Despot's father: *They share all the Euros among themselves, of course... they give generously the money to the foreigners who are employed here, and to us, the locals, the working class, does not really matter, no one cares, just a little bit more than a minimum wage*<sup>38</sup>). The lady brings strong alcohol to the father and comments that she barely earns the minimum wage, while other

<sup>36</sup> *Šifra Despot*, episode 7, "(Ne)vladina Organizacija," directed by Radoš Bajić, aired March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, on TV Pink.

<sup>37</sup> Scott Sedita identifies a group of sitcom characters he called *The Bitch/Bastard*, and it can be applied to the employees of the NGO. Although this category does not completely fit the context here, there are some elements of this type of characters that could be applied on the NGO employees, such as *Bitchy, Condescending, High and might, Manipulative, Mean spirited, Tough exterior*: Scott Sedita, 114.

<sup>38</sup> Bajić, dir., "(Ne)vladina organizacija".

Serbian workers who betray interests of their country have a very generous salary. The father is repulsed by this and says that it was obvious from the beginning that some kind of exploitation is taking place here.

The second episode it is worth looking at more closely here is titled *Gay Bank (Gej banka)*<sup>39</sup>. Father advises Despot to collaborate with the gay organization, as the LGBT community in the eyes of a typical Serbian citizen gets lots of money from the EU, and that is what Despot does. He is in talks with the gay organization to create software for them, which they would use to open up a gay sperm bank. The organization is represented by an over-the-top flamboyant gay couple that come to Despot's house and spark interests of neighbors and family members. Knowing that Despot is about to seal a deal worth several thousands of Euros, the father welcomes the couple warmly into the house against his conservative beliefs. The couple finds out that Despot is straight and has a girlfriend and comments that Despot would not have gotten the job if they had known that. The couple explains that the organization is very prosperous as they are financed by Brussels (*You probably know us from the TV, we are financed by the European Commission directly*<sup>40</sup>, they explain to the father), which is the second time Brussels is brought up in the series, and both times in the same context.

The couple and Despot soon embark in Despot's little vehicle and travel towards the organization's headquarters. The gay organization is celebrating a wedding of two men, one of whom is dressed in a wedding gown, as Despot and a couple arrive at the scene. The gay organization obviously has a lot of money at their disposal, as they are having a party by the pool in a very luxurious setting. Despot soon gets to know the leader of the organization, Hans, a German living in the Netherlands. The couple warns him that Hans has a lot of expectations from him, as the contract states that besides creating the software, Despot has to please Hans sexually. Hans is subsequently represented as a pervert who obsessively watches Despot while licking his mouth from excitement.

<sup>39</sup> *Šifra Despot*, episode 9, "Gej banka," directed by Radoš Bajić, aired March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, on TV Pink.

<sup>40</sup> Bajić, dir., "Gej Banka".

We can conclude that all characters in the series *Code Despot* could be placed in 3 categories based on their agency, identity and class of people they represent and how are they portrayed:

Table 1

<b>1. Despot and his parents, the neighbor</b>	Honest, without bad intentions, trying to survive as honest citizens
<b>2. Local business partners and clients</b>	Smart and righteous, not over-the-top, but still funny and comedic, likable
<b>3. NGO and other “foreign agents”</b>	Serious, the characters you do not laugh with, but you laugh at, evil and sinister

Only characters from the third category, who are financed by foreign money, are seen as the enemies of the working class and someone who has bad intentions. Rather than placing inequality in terms of corruption, distribution of economic resources, lack of political will for a change, deteriorating conditions of existence or class (winery managers and her employees), the inequality is placed only in the context of the domestic versus foreign flow of money. Wealth inequality and exploitation are mentioned only in the context of the NGO, foreign actors, although the reality in Serbia confirms that there is no stark difference in working conditions between foreign and domestic employers.

#### *Social mobility through individual effort (IT or entrepreneurship)*

We can see this in the way Despot's job is set up (he is a programmer who has his own little business). He has an abundance of opportunities for work (his career choice has paid off), there is a lot of money in play, and the very important fact is that Despot comes from a low-income rural family (which would mean that he took advantage of education to improve his social and economic position). This is directly referred to in the episode *Gay Bank*, when during a lunch with his wife, Despot and Despot's girlfriend, the father of the family says: *When money comes to the house it's always a feast, an improvement. [...] I always told him [to Despot, prim.aut.], the information technology sector is the future! If I hadn't given him this advice, pushed him to get educated, he would have been working somewhere for 200 Euros in diapers.*<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Bajić, dir., "Gej Banka".

## 6 Conclusion

The research is a contribution to the understanding of fictional media in reproducing dominant discourses and the formation of a neoliberal subject in a country going through a process of market liberalization, aggressive privatization and large wealth inequality. Almost every news outlet is being co-opted into this political project, expressing no critical stance. In this case, I looked into another side of media, fictional comedic content, one that does not refer to politics directly, but plays a role in the formation of the ideological *imaginarium*.

In the case of the analyzed series we could see that the content does provide an apparatus that the audience can use to understand and interpret their political reality and conditions of existence.<sup>42</sup> The author, Radoš Bajić, known for rather conservative and audio-visual content that glorifies rural lifestyle, ventured to create a sitcom about entrepreneurship, modernization and urbanization, and it is of great importance to understand how this contributes to the Ideological State Apparatus that educates citizens on their socio-economic reality.

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<sup>42</sup> Jürgen Raab and Dirk Tänzler, "Video Hermeneutics," in *Video Analysis: Methodology and Methods, Qualitative Audiovisual Data Analysis in Sociology*, ed. Hubert Knoblauch, Bernt Schnettler, Jürgen Raab and Hans-Georg Soeffner (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 85.

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